

UAPAM BULLETIN



UAPAM PRESIDENT
MRS. LUCY
NAKYOBE
MBONYE:
"TOGETHER, WE
CAN DELIVER
AN EFFICIENT
PUBLIC SECTOR"



SHAPING A RESILIENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FOR AFRICA

Perspectives from the
43rd AAPAM conference

What keeps Uganda's
Public service working?

Digital push
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UAPAM

**UGANDA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND MANAGEMENT**

Vision

To be the leading professional Association of Public Administrators and Managers in Africa.



Mission

To uphold professionalism and values of Public Administrators and Managers in Uganda.



Core Principles

Integrity and Accountability;

Transparency and empathy;

Independence and impartiality;



1. Develop and promote professional standards for public administrators and managers in Uganda.
2. Promote continuous competence-based research and innovation in public administration and management.
3. To enhance the awareness and visibility of the public administration professional and public administration practice.
4. Promote the Association's competitiveness and sustainability.
5. Strengthen support structures to effectively and efficiently deliver UAPAM services.



UAPAM

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Uganda Management Institute
Makerere College School

Building a high-performing public sector



Amid rising public concern over the quality and reliability of public service delivery in Uganda, this maiden *UAPAM Bulletin*, January–December 2025, offers a timely and authoritative intervention. Under the theme “Sustainable, Accountable, Responsive, Efficient, and Inclusive Public Service in Uganda,” the bulletin engages directly with the urgent need to revitalise state institutions.

Its launch coincides with a pivotal moment marked by far-reaching administrative reforms aimed at strengthening governance and enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly demanding global environment. By bringing evidence, analysis, and professional insight to the forefront, the bulletin positions itself as a catalyst for meaningful transformation in Uganda.

UAPAM Bulletin is designed as a multi-perspective communication tool that we will intentionally use to influence reform, amplify best practices, and provide a platform for innovative solutions. It specifically targets policymakers, public administrators, development practitioners, academicians, and emerging leaders who believe that public resources must benefit every citizen. “We affirm that great nations are built not only through well-crafted plans but through implementation that delivers transparency that stands firm and leadership anchored in integrity.”

With a strong professional editorial board recently appointed by the UAPAM executive, we aim to provide a medium through which academia, policymakers, and implementers can engage in meaningful conversations to strengthen public administration in our region, especially as we advance steadily toward East African integration.

This edition features highlights from the AAPAM Conference, held in Munyonyo, Kampala from November 26th–29th, 2024, as well as policy briefs, research contributions, and member success stories arising from strategic engagement

in research, training, knowledge sharing, and professional development in public administration and management across all government agencies in Uganda.

We remain committed to building a vibrant, ethical, and evidence-based community of public administration professionals, including young practitioners. Your active participation in UAPAM publications and activities is vital to achieving transformative service delivery. In our next issue, coming soon, we invite administrators and managers to contribute articles and advertisements for publication.

Those eligible to become members of UAPAM include public administrators and managers. For details on joining, visit our official website www.uapam.org.

We thank all our partners and stakeholders, including advertisers, for their continued support and invite you to contribute articles, thought pieces, and innovations in public service. Let us, together, shape a better future for public sector governance in Uganda and Africa.

Also, together, we shall build a resilient, inclusive, and high-performing public administration. Happy reading!

Dr. Martin Muyingo

muyingomartin00@gmail.com
Editor-in-Chief



Together, through unity and shared learning, we can build efficient, responsive, and innovative public sectors across the continent.



Together we can deliver an efficient public sector

Greetings to all UAPAM members and partners, especially those who have consistently supported our efforts to promote the professionalisation of public administration and management in Uganda.

In 2023, we appointed two dedicated teams to review the UAPAM Constitution and to develop a strategic plan for 2023 -2028. I commend the team members for their professionalism and voluntary commitment, which resulted in the successful development and approval of these key documents by the General Assembly. These milestones have strengthened our institutional capacity, expanded our membership, and enabled the successful hosting of the 43rd AAPAM Conference at Munyonyo Resort Hotel from November 26th to 29th, 2024.

The Conference attracted delegates from across Africa and beyond. UAPAM extends appreciation to His Excellency, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, for his patriotic message during the opening ceremony. Also, thanks to the Government of Uganda for financing the event and to the organising committee for the exemplary work that contributed immensely to its success.

The vibrant discussions and rich knowledge shared throughout the Conference reinforced essential lessons from previous gatherings. I am confident that these insights will influence improvements in public service delivery in Uganda.

I call upon all public servants, private-sector

professionals, and members of civil society to join UAPAM and benefit from the vast opportunities for growth, learning, and collaboration it offers. I also encourage our youth and emerging leaders to embrace UAPAM’s mission and actively contribute to shaping a better Africa.

Together, through unity and shared learning, we can build efficient, responsive, and innovative public sectors across the continent. This will strengthen our collective efforts toward achieving the National Development Plan IV, Vision 2040, Africa’s Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I urge all members to prepare for the upcoming AAPAM Conference in the Zwatini Kingdom from 2nd to 4th December 2025.

For God and My Country.

Lucy Nakiyobe Mbonye

President, UAPAM and Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet



Advancing Uganda's Public Administration

I extend my appreciation to all those who have supported AAPAM and UAPAM activities. Special thanks go to the organisers of the 43rd UAPAM Conference, including the staff of the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), for their dedicated efforts in ensuring the event's success.

The recent conference hosted in Kampala proved valuable for both practitioners and scholars, who presented excellent papers highlighting current best practices in public administration and management.

This maiden edition of the *UAPAM Bulletin* will significantly help popularise the association's activities, thanks to the commitment of our stakeholders who have supported us thus far. Special recognition goes to the Government of Uganda, the executive, and our development partners who have gone the extra mile to strengthen the association.

I believe this platform will serve as a vital tool for mobilising key stakeholders, fostering consensus on critical development priorities, and proposing better ways to address them.

I encourage all members and partners to continue actively supporting UAPAM's activities, and I reaffirm that the UMI remains committed to providing the institutional support needed for the association to thrive.

Prof. James L. Nkata

**Secretary General, UAPAM and
Director General-UMI**



I believe this platform will serve as a vital tool for mobilising key stakeholders, fostering consensus on critical development priorities, and proposing better ways to address them.



The future of Africa depends on our ability

It is with great pride and a profound sense of responsibility that I associate myself with the *UAPAM Bulletin* as the President of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM). This reinforces Uganda's role as a leader and a model in promoting professionalism in public administration and management across the continent.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Uganda and to my colleagues and friends for their support, which enabled me to assume the presidency of AAPAM. I also applaud the continued dedication of UAPAM members in upholding resilience, innovation, and excellence in public administration and management in Uganda.

I was deeply inspired by the pivotal role Uganda played in successfully hosting the 43rd AAPAM Roundtable Conference and Annual General Meeting in Kampala from November 26th–29th, 2024. This event further strengthened our continental leadership in promoting excellence in public administration. The theme of last year's conference, "Promoting Agile and Resilient Public Administration Frameworks for Sustainable Development in Africa," resonated deeply with the challenges and opportunities facing our continent today. In a world marked by rapid technological, economic, and environmental changes, public administration must evolve to remain dynamic, responsive, and inclusive.

Our discussions in Kampala highlighted the need for governance systems that are not only robust but also adaptable—capable of addressing present needs while anticipating future challenges. As Uganda holds the presidency of AAPAM, we have a unique opportunity to lead by example. Our nation has made significant strides in promoting effective governance, strengthening institutions, and enhancing public service delivery. Yet challenges remain, and platforms like the *UAPAM Bulletin* provide crucial avenues for sharing best practices, fostering innovations, and building strategic partnerships to address them.

Together, we must explore strategies to advance ethical governance, economic resilience, and technology integration, all while aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. I am particularly proud of

the recognition given to outstanding institutions and individuals during the conference, including Ugandan contributors who have made significant strides in public administration. These accolades remind us that excellence in public service is not merely a goal but a catalyst for transformative change.

As we move forward, I urge all AAPAM members to remain committed to collaboration and innovation. Let us work closely with political leaders to ensure that our administrative frameworks are grounded in ideological clarity and a shared vision for socio-economic transformation. As emphasised during the conference, patriotism and pan-Africanism are essential for overcoming structural challenges and unlocking Africa's vast potential.



I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Uganda, under the leadership of H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, for their unwavering support in hosting this landmark event. I also thank the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), our steadfast partner, and Mrs. Lucy Nakyobe Mbonye, Head of Public Service and President of the AAPAM Uganda Chapter, for their tireless efforts in advancing our shared objectives.

Together, let us continue to build a public administration that is agile, resilient, and dedicated to serving the people of Uganda and Africa. The future of our continent depends on our ability to deliver efficient, inclusive, and sustainable services. I am confident that, with your dedication and expertise, we will achieve this vision.

Dr. John Nakabago
President, AAPAM
Director of Finance and Administration,
Uganda Management Institute



THE ROLE OF UAPAM IN Strengthening governance and public administration in Uganda



By Dr Tom Alfred Wanyakala

Good governance is pivotal to Uganda's ambitious social and economic transformation, as enshrined in Vision 2040 and the Third National Development Plan (NDP III). At the heart of this agenda lies the Uganda Association of Public Administration and Management (UAPAM), the national chapter of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM). Established to advance professionalism in the public sector, UAPAM drives capacity building, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based reforms, aligning with continental goals like the African Union Agenda 2063



Finance ministry staff participating in the Africa Public Service Day Walk from Constitutional Square to Kololo Ceremonial Grounds in Kampala.

and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (National Planning Authority, 2020; UAPAM, 2023).

Professional Development for Effective Governance

UAPAM serves as a premier platform for public administrators, managers, and policymakers to sharpen skills in leadership, strategic planning, and citizen-centred service delivery. Its annual conferences, workshops, seminars, and mentorship programmes cultivate excellence through targeted capacity-building initiatives that reach emerging professionals. Empirical studies affirm that bolstered institutional capacity is essential for seamless service



UAPAM champions integrity through ethics-focused training, policy forums, and advocacy campaigns

delivery, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Karyeija & Ssonko, 2022). By prioritising ethical decision-making, accountability, and operational efficiency, UAPAM's offerings empower civil servants to navigate complex administrative landscapes with agility and integrity.

Building Accountability and Ethical Leadership

In an era where trust in institutions hinges on transparency, UAPAM champions integrity through ethics-focused training, policy forums, and advocacy campaigns, aiming to host two such programmes annually.

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These efforts embed robust ethical standards into public practice, curbing corruption and fostering public confidence (Mubangizi, 2021). UAPAM's emphasis on accountability aligns with NDP IV's public sector transformation imperatives, ensuring that administrative reforms not only endure but also inspire a culture of responsible stewardship across Uganda's bureaucracy.

Fostering Research and Policy Innovation

UAPAM acts as a vital nexus for research and dialogue, partnering with universities, the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), and international bodies to produce actionable insights on governance challenges. By committing to publishing peer-reviewed papers each year, the Association disseminates findings through its bulletin, symposia, and best-practice catalogues, bridging academic theory with practical application (Mukwaya, 2020).

Recent collaborations have spotlighted innovations in performance management, local governance, and digital tools, informing policies on decentralisation and citizen participation. This research ecosystem has directly enhanced Uganda's administrative resilience, as evidenced by UAPAM's contributions to AAPAM Roundtable Conferences.

Supporting Decentralised and Inclusive Governance

Uganda's decentralisation framework requires empowered local authorities to deliver services close to communities. UAPAM bolsters this by tailoring training for district-level administrators, emphasising participatory governance and inclusive leadership. Studies highlight that success in devolution correlates with skilled, accountable local cadres (Nkurunziza, 2020). Moreover, UAPAM actively promotes diversity, integrating women and youth into leadership pipelines through targeted mentorship and advocacy, thereby

ensuring equitable voices in policy formulation and amplifying marginalised perspectives in national discourse.

Sustainability, Collaboration, and Future Outlook

UAPAM's enduring impact stems from its ecosystem of partnerships, including memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with government ministries, development agencies, and regional networks like AAPAM. This collaborative ethos underpins sustainable reforms, as evidenced by joint initiatives in knowledge exchange and institutional strengthening (Tumwine, 2021).

A landmark achievement was Uganda's hosting of the 43rd AAPAM Annual Roundtable Conference in November 2024, which convened global experts on public sector innovation under the theme of transformed leadership. Looking ahead, UAPAM's 2023–2026 Strategic Plan—anchored in five pillars of transformation, research, financial sustainability, visibility, and support structures—prioritises digital governance advancements, such as an interactive website rollout by 2025 and 40% operational automation by 2027 (UAPAM, 2023). Enhanced ethics audits and certification programs will further synchronise Ugandan practices with global benchmarks, propelling the public sector toward Vision 2040's vision of a prosperous, inclusive society.

Conclusion

UAPAM's legacy as a catalyst for governance excellence is undeniable. By forging a cadre of ethical, innovative, and inclusive public servants, it fortifies the foundations of accountable administration. As Uganda strides toward sustainable development, UAPAM's unwavering dedication to professionalism and evidence-led innovation will remain indispensable, ensuring public institutions are not just efficient but profoundly citizen-responsive.

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JOIN UAPAM TODAY

Aspiring members—public administrators, academics, policymakers, and enthusiasts—can elevate their careers by joining this dynamic network. Membership unlocks access to exclusive trainings, research resources, mentorship opportunities, and connections with government ministries and international partners.

To apply, visit the UAPAM website at www.uapam.org to download the online application form, or contact the Secretariat using the details provided on the site. Become part of the transformation—your expertise can shape Uganda’s governance future.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FUTURE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EVENTS (POST-NOVEMBER 25, 2025)

As of November 25, 2025, public administration events are gearing up for 2026 and beyond, with a focus on digital transformation, resilience, agile governance, and regional challenges like anti-corruption and sustainable development. Below, I highlight key upcoming events for UAPAM (Uganda Association of Public Administration and Management) and AAPAM (African Association for Public Administration and Management), followed by other notable global, regional, and national events likely to interest readers in policy, governance, and management. These selections emphasise publishable, high-impact gatherings with broad appeal, drawing from official announcements and calendars.



UAPAM EVENTS

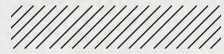
UAPAM, the Uganda-focused body promoting public sector excellence, often aligns with continental forums like AAPAM’s roundtables.

- UAPAM-specific events planned for 2026 are the National Conference on Governance and Public Administration
- International Conference on Governance and Public Administration (ICGPA): April 1, 2026, Kampala, Uganda. This event will explore governance innovations and public sector reforms, with sessions on policy implementation and administrative efficiency, ideal for UAPAM members and East African public administration practitioners.

AAPAM EVENTS

AAPAM’s calendar emphasises agile, resilient administration for Africa’s development. Their annual roundtables are flagship events, with rotating hosts across continents.

Event	Date	Location	Theme/Key Highlights
44th AAPAM Roundtable Conference	December 2-5, 2025	Mbabane/Matsapha, Kingdom of Eswatini	“Agile Public Administration: Partnership and Digital Transformation for Citizen-Centric Service Delivery.” Features workshops on digital tools, public-private partnerships, and service delivery; includes AGM and networking for 500+ African administrators.
Babita Deokaran Annual Lecture	December 9, 2025	Yellowwood Room, Belville Park Campus, South Africa	Anti-corruption strategies in public service; honours the late whistleblower with expert panels on ethics and accountability (10:00–16:00 SAST).



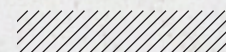
The 45th Roundtable is expected in late 2026 (likely November/December), but host and theme details are pending—AAPAM typically announces mid-year.

OTHER NOTABLE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EVENTS

These span global forums, digital governance summits, and regional spotlights, selected for their influence on policy discourse, research sharing, and professional development. Priorities include innovation, equity, and post-SDG implementation.

Event	Date	Location	Theme/Key Highlights
International Winter School on Public Policy (IPPA Doha Edition)	January 18–22, 2026	Doha, Qatar	Advanced training on policy analysis, foresight, and global challenges; interactive sessions for early-career researchers and practitioners, emphasising Middle East contexts.
ASPA Annual Conference	March 20–24, 2026	Hollywood, CA, USA	“Building a Bridge to Renewal and Resilience.” Premier U.S. gathering for 1,000+ professionals; panels on crisis management, equity in administration, and leadership renewal.
Re-Imagining Citizenship in the Arab Region Conference	May 4–6, 2026	Beirut, Lebanon (American University of Beirut)	Civil society, citizenship reforms, and public management in MENA; includes invitation-only leadership forum (May 4) and publishing workshop (May 6–7) on Middle East public admin research.
Public Management Research Conference (PMRC)	June 4–6, 2026 (workshops June 3)	Washington, D.C., USA	Cutting-edge research on public sector innovation, hosted by American University, with calls for papers on evidence-based management and global collaborations.
International Conference on International Public Administration and Politics (ICIPAP)	January 31–February 1, 2026	TBD (likely UAE or regional hub)	Global politics and admin intersections; focuses on international reforms, diplomacy, and policy transfer.
APPAM Fall Research Conference	November 5–7, 2026	Boston, MA, USA	Evidence-driven policy refinement; explores collaborative evaluation to mitigate unintended consequences, with tracks on social inclusion and economic policy.
Dg.o 2026: 27th International Conference on Digital Government Research	TBD 2026 (likely spring/summer)	TBD	“Collaborative Digital Transformation for Public Value Creation.” Highlights AI, data governance, and inclusive e-services, making it a key venue for global digital admin experts.

These events build on 2025’s momentum (e.g., UN Public Service Forum themes), addressing trust-building, AI ethics, and fiscal resilience amid global shifts. In the Arab region, the Re-Imagining Citizenship conference stands out for its focus on transitions in the MENA region. Readers in academia or government should monitor calls for papers—deadlines often start in early 2026.



UPCOMING UN PUBLIC SERVICE FORUM: 2026 EDITION

The United Nations Public Service Forum (UNPSF) is an annual global platform for public administration leaders, policymakers, and innovators to discuss governance challenges, share best practices, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Following the 2025 Forum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (June 23–25, themed “Five Years to 2030: Innovation and Transformation for Service Delivery”), the next edition is scheduled for June 2026 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Preparatory work is underway, with the event hosted by Georgia’s Ministry of Justice.

Dates	June 2026 (exact dates not yet announced; typically mid-to-late June, spanning 3 days)
Location	Tbilisi, Georgia
Host/Organisers	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in partnership with the Government of Georgia (Ministry of Justice)
Theme	Not yet announced (expected to focus on innovation, resilience, and equitable service delivery, building on SDG priorities)
Expected Focus Areas	Public sector innovation, digital transformation, inclusive governance, and the UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA) ceremony; anticipated attendance of 800–1,000 participants from governments, international organisations, and civil society
Related Highlights	The Forum will include the presentation of the 2026 UNPSA winners in four categories: (1) Delivering inclusive and equitable services; (2) Gender-responsive public services; (3) Fostering innovation to deliver effective public services; (4) Building trust and accountability in public institutions. Applications for the awards closed in April 2025.

This event underscores Georgia’s growing role in international public administration dialogues, as highlighted during UN discussions in 2025. For updates, including registration and the full agenda, monitor the official UN DESA website (publicadministration.un.org). If more details emerge closer to the date, they will likely be posted there.





UAPAM



UGANDA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (UAPAM)

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Email: uapaminfo@gmail.com

PASSPORT
SIZE
PHOTO

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/REGISTRATION FORM

Membership of the Association is open to any individual and institution/organization that wishes to promote public administration and management in Uganda.

A. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:

1. Name (in capital):
(Surname) (First name)
2. Sex (Tick where appropriate): Male: Female:
3. Indicate the highest level of education attained (tick where appropriate)
'O' Level 'A' Level Diploma Degree
Others (specify):
4. Area of professional specialization.....
.....
5. Address: (Office).....
.....
6. Tel: Fax:
7. E-mail:.....
8. Address: (Home).....
9. Tel: Fax:
10. E-mail:.....

1

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Corporate Representatives: Prof Gerald Kagambirwe Karyeija, Mr. Benon Moses Kigenyi, Dr. Martin Musingo, Mr. Alinafe Kalule, Ms. Nankunda Docus, Ms. Maria Namugga Kafeero

11. List other professional organizations in which you are a member

.....

.....

.....

.....

B. INSTITUTIONAL/ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP:

1. Name of Institution/Organization.....
2. Type of Institution/Organization:
3. Title/Designation of contact official:
4. Address:.....
5. Tel: Fax:
6. E-mail:
7. Website:.....
8. Employment/Career History (**please begin with the latest**)

Position	Organization	Date

C: DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL/ ORGANISATIONAL MOTIVATION

Describe briefly your individual/organizational interests to and expectations from the Association.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEES:

- (i) Student’s membership - US\$50 or Equivalent in **Ugx190,000=** (Annually)
- (i) Individual Membership -US\$100 or equivalent in **Ugx380,000=** [Annually]
- (ii) Registration fee -US\$7 or equivalent in **Ugx25,000=** [payable once]
- (iii) Institutional/Organ. Membership - US\$1000 or equivalent in **Ugx3,800,000=** Annually]

ACCOUNT DETAILS

ACCOUNT NAME:	Uganda Association for Public Administration and Management (UAPAM)
BANK:	Housing Finance Bank Kololo Branch
ACCOUNT NO.	1110015838247
TAX IDENTIFICATION No.	1048528221



President Museveni at the AAPAM Conference at Speke Resort Munyonyo

Shaping Africa’s agile and resilient public administration in Kampala

For four days, the calm shores of Lake Victoria at Munyonyo Resort Hotel, in Kampala, transformed into a hub of ideas, debate, and visioning as over 700 delegates gathered for the annual African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) Conference.

From November 26–29, 2024, policymakers, scholars, civil servants, and young leaders from across the continent converged to reflect on the future of governance under the theme: “Agile and Resilient Public Administration for Sustainable Development in Africa.”

This was the first time in nearly three decades that Uganda hosted the AAPAM Conference, making the occasion both historic and symbolic. The event opened with a mix of pomp and Pan-African solidarity, setting the tone for days of intense engagement, cultural exchange, and networking.

A Presidential Call to Duty

In his keynote address at the opening ceremony, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Tibuhaburwa warmly welcomed the delegates, urging them to rethink Africa’s public service ethos. He reminded civil servants that colonial-era bureaucracies designed to frustrate rather than serve still linger in many African administrations.

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“Public servants must always ask themselves: How does my work benefit the African people?” the President said. He emphasised that legitimacy and trust would only be earned when governance is rooted in citizens’ needs and aspirations. The President also encouraged participants to enjoy Uganda’s hospitality, highlighting the conference’s spirit of both intellectual and cultural exchange.

A Gathering of Africa’s Top Minds

Mrs. Lucy Nakyobe Mbonye, Uganda’s Head of Civil Service, who also serves as President of the Uganda Association of Public Administration and Management (UAPAM), welcomed colleagues from across the continent. She called for openness in sharing lessons and experiences, noting that the true strength of African governance lies in learning from one another.

For Mr. John Nakabago, the newly elected President

AAPAM 2025 was more than just a conference; it was a call for leaders to reinvent the public service as a tool for empowerment, unity, and transformation.

of AAPAM and a Ugandan, the occasion was deeply personal. He expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him by peers and urged young delegates to step forward boldly. “The future of Africa rests in your hands,” he told the young participants.

The Director General of Uganda Management Institute (UMI), Prof. James L. Nkata, also Secretary of the UAPAM chapter, assured



delegates of Uganda’s readiness to provide both logistical support and intellectual hospitality. He highlighted UMI’s role in advancing best practices in governance and invited participants to explore Uganda’s historical and cultural landmarks—from the Namugongo Martyrs’ Shrine to the Kasubi Tombs. It was at Namugongo in 1887 that a local King (known as Kabaka) in Buganda, central Uganda, ordered the killing of his pages who had embraced Christianity. They have since become martyrs, with some recognised as saints according to Catholic tenets. The Kasubi Tombs serve as the burial grounds for the kings of Buganda and are designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The opening ceremony was not only intellectual but also cultural, enriched with traditional Ugandan music, dance, and drama that continued throughout the conference days—an embodiment of the continent’s rich heritage.

CELEBRATING INNOVATION AND SERVICE

As the conference concluded, attention shifted to achievements and recognition. The closing ceremony, led by Mrs. Lucy Nakyobe Mboye, was a lively celebration of music and camaraderie. She praised the Kenyan delegation, which had won the Golden Innovative African Public Administration and Management Award for 2024, urging other nations to follow Kenya’s example and raise the bar for excellence.

One of the most emotional moments came when Haji Yunus Kakande, Secretary to the Office of the President of Uganda, was honoured with the Best Public Servant Performer of 2024 award. In his acceptance speech, he called on fellow African civil servants to embody integrity, efficiency, and vision, reminding them that the continent’s development agenda depends heavily on their efforts.

“The weight of Africa’s transformation rests with us,” he said. “Without dedicated public servants, policies cannot be translated into progress.”

UGANDA’S HOSTING SHINES

Feedback from delegates was overwhelmingly positive. Many praised the organisation, security, and warm Ugandan hospitality. Importantly, the five-day conference went smoothly, allowing participants to focus fully on exchanging ideas and experiences.

By the time the final cultural performances ended, there was a shared feeling of pride and purpose. Delegates left Uganda not only inspired but also committed to advancing the agenda of agile and resilient public administration in their home countries.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Kampala gathering reinforced a clear truth: Africa’s sustainable development depends on governance systems that are adaptable, people-centred, and resilient amidst global changes. AAPAM 2025 was more than just a conference; it was a call for leaders to reinvent the public service as a tool for empowerment, unity, and transformation. As one young delegate said, “If we get public administration right, then Africa gets everything else right.”



Reconstructing Africa’s public administration to deliver services



By the UAPAM Communication Team

In November 2024, Kampala became the continental hub for dialogue on Africa’s governance future as Uganda proudly co-hosted the 43rd Annual Roundtable Conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) with the Uganda Association of Public Administration and Management (UAPAM).

Held under the theme Agile and Resilient Public Administration for Sustainable Development in Africa, the conference brought together public sector professionals, scholars, policymakers, and development partners from across Africa and beyond. It was a historic moment and opportunity to reflect on lessons, share innovations, and reaffirm a shared commitment to visionary, ethical, and citizen-focused administration.

From memorable keynote speeches to groundbreaking panel discussions, Uganda’s leadership in governance reform was on full display.

Below are the key highlights and takeaways.

Trust and Broken Promises: Rebuilding Credibility in Governance

Dr. John Mary Kauzya delivered one of the most sobering reflections of the conference, tackling the crisis of trust in Uganda’s governance. He argued that unfulfilled promises, whether delayed infrastructure projects, stalled reforms, or unkept pledges, have eroded citizen confidence in public institutions. “Trust is not automatic. It is earned through consistent, ethical, and

transparent leadership,” he reminded delegates.

Dr. Kauzya called for genuine dialogue, stronger accountability, and the political will to translate policy into action. Rebuilding legitimacy, he argued, must begin with putting citizens’ interests at the centre of governance.

Adding to this theme, Dr. Stella Kyohairwe and colleagues synthesised research from Uganda Management Institute (UMI) dissertations spanning 2010–2022. Their findings underscored the role of academic inquiry in shaping policy reforms on decentralisation, service delivery, and accountability—showing how scholarship can bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Building Resilient Institutions

Across the sessions, a recurring theme was the need for resilient public institutions tailored to Africa’s unique realities.

Prof. Ukertor Gabriel Moti warned against wholesale transplantation of foreign governance models, urging context-driven reforms that foster adaptability and responsiveness. “Resilience is not just surviving shocks,” he stressed, “it is learning, evolving, and consistently delivering public value.”

Meanwhile, Prof. Gerald Kagambirwe Karyeija zeroed in on electoral governance, calling for reforms to strengthen the independence and credibility of electoral commissions across Africa. His recommendations, including transparent recruitment, stronger oversight, and adequate resourcing, resonated as a path to restore trust in democratic institutions.



Inclusive and Participatory Governance
In a powerful case study, Beatrice Oling Adong shared lessons from Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital’s COVID-19 response. By involving frontline staff in decision-making, prioritising communication, and engaging communities, the hospital demonstrated how inclusive governance builds resilience even in times of crisis. Her message: citizen trust grows when institutions open their doors to participation.

Partnerships for Development: PPPs in Focus

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) were spotlighted as vital tools for bridging Africa’s resource gaps. Case studies from Kenya and Uganda showcased PPPs in infrastructure, climate action, and pandemic recovery. Panellists stressed that success depends on transparent procurement, clear performance metrics, and strong oversight. Done right, PPPs can create citizen-centred, sustainable services that governments alone might struggle to provide.

Celebrating Excellence and Recognising Innovation

No AAPAM conference would be complete without celebrating those who embody the ideals of ethical, innovative, and impactful public service. The year 2024 was no exception.

The Golden Innovative African Public Administration and Management Award went to the Kenyan delegation, recognised for their outstanding reform projects that demonstrated how innovation can transform governance. Their work was hailed as a model for others to learn from, inspiring friendly competition across the continent.

Uganda also had its moment of pride when Haji Yunus Kakande, Secretary in the Office of the President, was honoured as the country’s Best Performing Public Servant of 2024. The award underscored his decades-long commitment to professionalism and service. In his acceptance remarks, Haji Kakande urged colleagues across Africa to “become role models of ethical leadership” and to embrace practices that can make the continent globally competitive.

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VOICES FROM THE CONFERENCE

Delegates repeatedly praised Uganda for its warmth, safety, and flawless organisation. Many described the 43rd AAPAM Conference as “one of the best held,” citing not only the intellectual richness of the discussions but also the cultural immersion—from traditional Ugandan performances to excursions to historical sites like Namugongo Martyrs Shrine and Kasubi Tombs. The presence of young leaders was particularly celebrated. AAPAM President George Nakabago urged them to engage actively in shaping Africa’s future, noting that resilience and agility in public administration will depend on their energy and creativity.



Looking Ahead: From Resolutions to Action

Resolutions adopted at the conference emphasised:

- Strengthening institutional resilience through context-driven reforms.
- Promoting ethical leadership and integrity as cornerstones of governance.
- Leveraging technology for transparent, citizen-centred service delivery.
- Expanding partnerships—between governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector—to sustain innovation.
- Nurturing youth leadership to secure Africa’s long-term governance agenda.

The Secretary General of UAPAM, in his closing message, applauded the event as “one of the most successful conferences ever organised” and called on members to carry the momentum forward.

Uganda’s Leadership Role

For Uganda, co-hosting the 43rd AAPAM Conference was more than a logistical success—it was a reaffirmation of its leadership within Africa’s governance landscape. As one of AAPAM’s oldest members, Uganda has consistently championed professional networks, capacity building, and reforms that align public service with the aspirations of African citizens.

The government’s unwavering support, UAPAM’s growing membership, and UMI’s academic contributions all reflect Uganda’s vision to be a hub

of knowledge, dialogue, and innovation in public administration.

Final Word: A Call to Action

As the curtains closed on the shores of Lake Victoria, the message was unmistakable: Africa’s sustainable development hinges on agile, resilient, and citizen-focused public administration.

The 43rd AAPAM Conference was not just a gathering of ideas—it was a clarion call for action. From Kampala to Nairobi, Accra to Addis Ababa, delegates left with a renewed sense of purpose: to reconstruct Africa’s governance systems with integrity, adaptability, and a people-first approach. “The future of Africa rests on our shoulders,” one delegate reminded the audience. “What we build today, with resilience and honesty, will define the continent for generations to come.”

Governance and Ethics: Africa’s Strategic Imperative

In the corridors of public administration across Africa, one truth resonates louder than ever: good governance without ethics is unsustainable. Integrity, accountability, and transparency are no longer lofty ideals—they are the bedrock of effective, legitimate leadership in a continent striving for sustainable development. As citizens demand more responsible governance, ethical leadership has emerged not only as a moral compass but also as a strategic imperative for progress.



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LESSONS FROM REFORM JOURNEYS

Across countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ghana, reform initiatives have illuminated valuable lessons.

- **Building Strong Institutions**

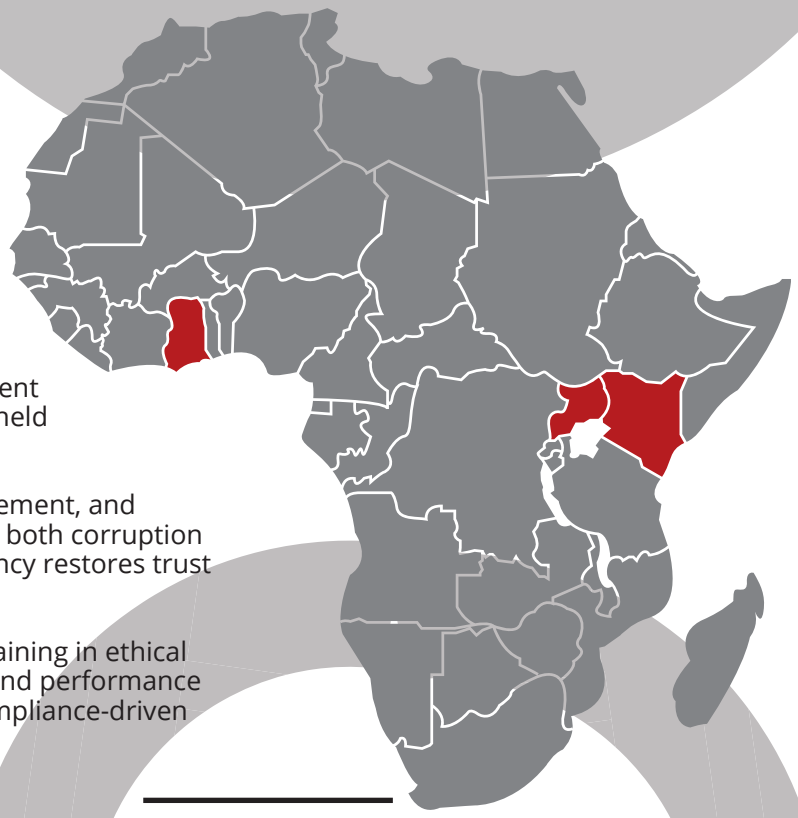
Clear codes of conduct, backed by independent oversight bodies, ensure public officials are held accountable for their actions.

- **Empowering Citizens**

When governments open budgeting, procurement, and service delivery processes to public scrutiny, both corruption declines and efficiency improves. Transparency restores trust where scepticism once reigned.

- **Shaping Public Service Culture**

Structural reforms alone are not enough. Training in ethical decision-making, merit-based recruitment, and performance appraisals can shift public servants from compliance-driven routines to values-driven professionalism.



Governance anchored in ethics is more than good practice; it is the only way to secure legitimacy, strengthen effectiveness, and empower citizens.



Persistent Challenges

The road to ethical governance is not without hurdles. Political interference, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited civic education often erode reform gains. These challenges remind us that ethics must be continuously defended and nurtured.

But there are rays of hope. Emerging innovations, e-governance platforms, social accountability tools, and integrity testing mechanisms are injecting new life into public service. They prove that with creativity and willpower, transparency can be institutionalised.

A Call to Ethical Leadership

Ultimately, reforms succeed only if leaders themselves lead by example. Managers and administrators must institutionalise ethics at every level, while policymakers must invest in ethical infrastructure from integrity systems to whistleblower protections.

Governance anchored in ethics is more than good practice; it is the only way to secure legitimacy, strengthen effectiveness, and empower citizens. As Africa's public service evolves to meet 21st-century challenges, the message is clear: ethics is not optional—it is the future of governance.



The Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, Ramathan Ggoobi, Under Secretary & Accounting Officer Dr. Sengonzi and Commissioner Enyimu checking on staff in their offices

Finance Ministry, a pillar of public administration and effective governance

By Mr. Apollo Munghinda

Uganda stands at a pivotal moment in its pursuit of sustainable development, with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) providing strategic leadership. The ministry’s mandate includes managing fiscal policy, mobilising resources, guiding national planning, and ensuring that policies align with national priorities, particularly the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), as well as global frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Economic Performance and Outlook

Uganda’s macroeconomic management has continued to demonstrate resilience, marked by strong economic growth, prudent fiscal discipline, and stability in the external sector. In collaboration with the Bank of Uganda, MoFPED has steered the country through complex global and regional shocks, maintaining momentum toward sustained recovery and growth.

In FY 2024/25, Uganda’s economy registered steady expansion. GDP grew by 6.3%, up from 6.1% in FY 2023/24, driven by increased government investments in productive sectors—particularly through the Parish Development Model (PDM), industrial production, services, tourism, and ongoing developments in the oil and gas sector.



HIGHLIGHTS

6.3%

GDP growth, up from 6.1% in FY 2023/24.

7%

Projected growth of the economy in FY 2025/26.

32%

Growth in exports of goods and services in FY 2024/25

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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION INSIGHTS

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The economy is projected to grow by 7.0% in FY 2025/26 and to maintain an average annual growth of at least 8% over the next five years. With the onset of commercial oil and gas production in 2026, Uganda is expected to enter a period of double-digit growth.

Inflation has remained low and within the 5% target, thanks to coordinated monetary and fiscal measures that continue to anchor macroeconomic stability. Stable global fuel prices and reduced domestic food prices—supported by favourable weather—have also contributed. The inflation outlook for FY 2025/26 remains firmly within the 5% medium-term target.

The Bank of Uganda has maintained the Central Bank Rate (CBR) at 9.75%, while the Uganda shilling continues to rank among Africa’s most stable currencies.

Private sector credit increased from Shs. 21.9 trillion to Shs. 23.9 trillion by the close of FY 2024/25, reflecting a 9.1% annual growth rate. To further expand private sector financing, Government is lowering access barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through subsidised capital using programmes such as PDM, Emyooga, the Agricultural Credit Facility (ACF), the Small Business Recovery Fund (SBRF), Uganda Development Bank (UDB), the Export Guarantee Scheme (INVITE), and the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF).

Cumulatively, the Government has invested approximately Shs. 11 trillion in wealth-creation funds to improve access to affordable financing and support for the 33% of Ugandans still operating in the informal sector to transition them into the money economy. Improvements in financial infrastructure, such as digitisation, consumer protection, financial literacy, and faster dispute resolution, continue to enhance the credit environment.

Exports of goods and services grew by 32% in FY 2024/25, reaching USD 13.3 billion, driven by higher coffee and cocoa volumes and prices, alongside gold re-exports. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rose to USD 3.664 billion from USD 2.996 billion in the previous year—a 22.3% increase. Remittances grew to USD 1.569 billion, up from USD 1.403 billion,



mainly from the USA, the EU, and the Middle East. Tourism receipts rose from USD 1.4 billion to USD 1.6 billion, representing 13.4% annual growth.

Fiscal reforms and strengthened domestic resource mobilisation have boosted government revenue and narrowed the fiscal deficit, supported by budget prioritisation and continued expansion of the tax base.

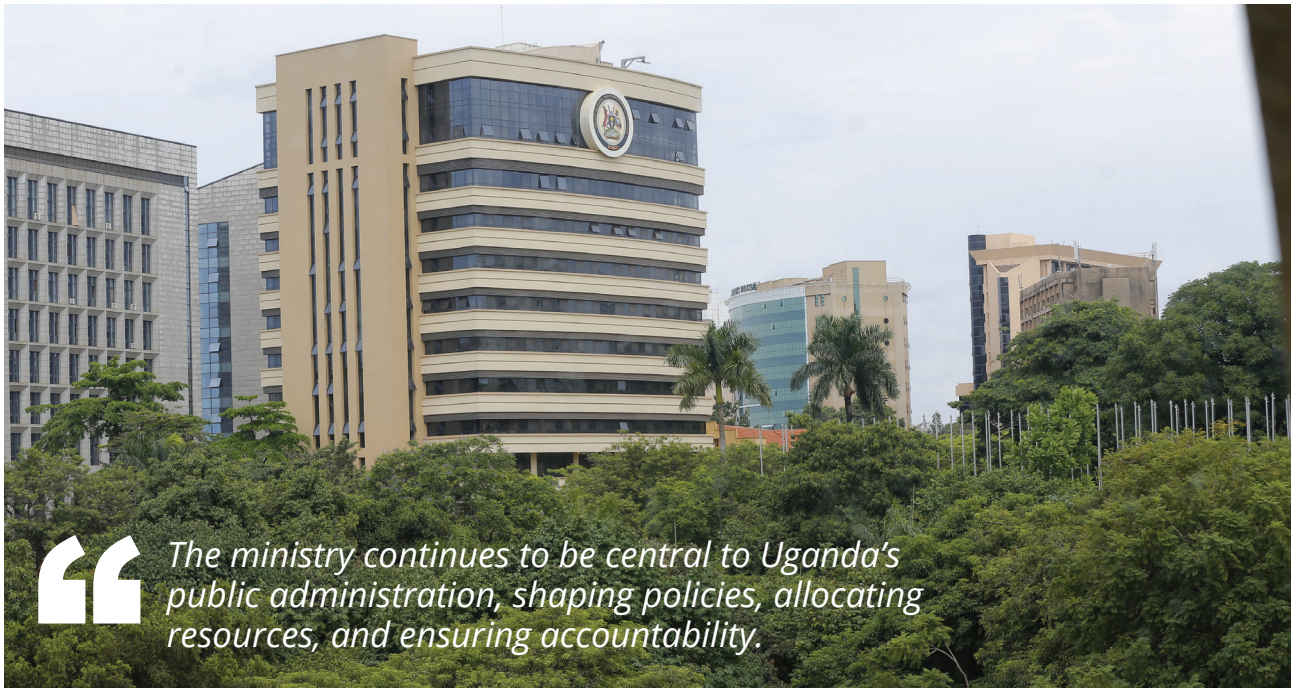
Strategic Policy Direction

Uganda’s strategic policy direction for FY 2026/27 and the medium term is driven by the ambition to expand the economy tenfold to USD 500 billion by 2040, achieved by doubling GDP every five years.

The strategy focuses on sustained investment in four priority growth drivers:

- Agro-industrialisation
- Tourism
- Mineral development, including oil and gas
- Science, Technology, and Innovation—including ICT and the creative arts

In addition, the Government will continue investing in the key enablers outlined in NDP IV and the Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs). These include security, transport infrastructure, electricity, irrigation, social services (education, health, and safe water), industrial parks, domestic revenue mobilisation, regional economic integration, environmental protection, disaster management, and the eradication of corruption.



The ministry continues to be central to Uganda's public administration, shaping policies, allocating resources, and ensuring accountability.

Data-Driven Governance and Enhanced Public Sector Efficiency

MoFPED's commitment to evidence-based decision-making has been strengthened by the 2024 National Population and Housing Census, which now provides the baseline for budget planning, programme targeting and delivery, and impact assessment. Detailed geo-coded data is enabling more precise allocation of resources to socially and geographically disadvantaged communities, whether in education, primary healthcare, water and sanitation, or climate resilience.

The ministry continues to champion transparency and accountability across the Government. Public Financial Management (PFM) remains central to Uganda's development, ensuring that every shilling—whether from taxpayers or development partners—delivers maximum impact.

The Government has further automated PFM processes to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Upgraded systems now support NDP IV's programme approach to planning, budgeting, budget execution, and performance reporting across all sectors.

Digital systems such as the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS), the Electronic Government Procurement (EGP) platform, and payroll control systems like Human Capital Management (HCM) have strengthened financial controls and reduced leakages.

Mainstreaming Digital Innovation in Financial Inclusion

Uganda's progress in financial inclusion has been significant. According to the 2023 Finscope report, overall financial inclusion among adults has increased to 81%, up from 70% in 2009. Mobile money remains the key driver, used by 66% of adults, and has played a transformative role in extending financial services to communities beyond the reach of formal banking.

Home savings, mobile money, and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) remain the most common savings mechanisms—each used by over 40% of adults.

Way Forward

The ministry continues to be central to Uganda's public administration, shaping policies, allocating resources, and ensuring accountability to foster inclusive and sustainable growth. With stronger institutions, data-informed planning, and targeted investments in key sectors, Uganda is preparing for rapid transformation.

The challenge ahead is maintaining discipline, deepening reforms, and making sure that every public shilling provides real value for citizens. These will not only pave the way for Uganda's journey toward a modern, resilient, and competitive economy, but they will make that transformation inevitable.



Building climate resilience through public administration

KEY STEPS FOR UGANDA

By Davis Mwenyi

In Uganda, as in many countries worldwide, climate change poses significant challenges to disaster management. Its impacts demand urgent attention and coordinated action from all stakeholders. Uganda is particularly vulnerable to climate-related disasters such as floods, landslides, and droughts, hazards that severely disrupt the economy, damage infrastructure, and threaten lives and livelihoods.

A major constraint lies in the limited resources available to the institutions charged with disaster management. These agencies continue to face funding gaps, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient technical capacity. Climate variability further heightens the susceptibility of systems, communities, and individuals to adverse impacts, while the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters continue to strain response and recovery mechanisms.

Rapid population growth and urbanisation compound these challenges. Rising pressure on land and resources, the spread of unplanned settlements—often in high-risk areas—and limited access to services among the urban poor all worsen

disaster vulnerability, particularly in cities like Kampala. Additionally, the lack of reliable and comprehensive climate-related data undermines timely decision-making and effective planning.

Strengthening Uganda's public administration systems for disaster management requires deliberate investment in institutional capacity, development of sustainable funding mechanisms, and the establishment of robust coordination frameworks across government and non-state actors.

Climate-smart planning, integrating climate considerations into policy, budgeting, and development planning, is essential for establishing a strong preparedness foundation and ensuring an effective response. It should include climate risk assessments, adaptation strategies to minimise climate-related impacts, development of resilient infrastructure, and sustainable land-use practices that reduce deforestation, prevent soil erosion, and protect ecosystem services. Public administration must also prioritise community-based adaptation (CBA), empowering local communities through participatory planning, context-specific solutions, and initiatives that support sustainable livelihoods.



Key recommendations include:

1 Government: significantly increase funding for disaster management and climate change programmes, strengthen institutional capacity, and integrate climate resilience into national and local development plans.

2 International community: provide sustained technical, financial, and research support to enhance Uganda's adaptive capabilities.

3 Civil society: intensify advocacy, support community-level interventions, and promote citizen engagement in climate resilience initiatives.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach that leverages public sector leadership, community participation, and international cooperation. Only through such collective action can Uganda build a resilient, adaptive, and future-ready disaster management system.

Uganda's ability to withstand and respond to climate-related disasters depends on the strength of its public administration systems. By increasing investment, enhancing institutional capacity, embracing climate-smart planning, and empowering communities, the country can build a resilient and well-coordinated disaster management framework.

With sustained public leadership, active community participation, and continued international support, Uganda is well-positioned to transform its vulnerability into long-term resilience and secure a safer, more adaptive future for all citizens.

The writer is the Commissioner of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Management in the Ministry of Relief and Disaster Preparedness. He is also a PhD candidate.



What keeps Uganda's public service working?

By Dr. Tom Alfred Wanyakala

Uganda's public service has delivered essential services for decades, despite severe financial constraints, episodes of corruption, and repeated political transitions. It has not collapsed; in many cases, it functions remarkably well, thanks to a combination of institutional depth, sustained reforms, international support, and the quiet dedication of thousands of public servants.

The service is anchored on strong and enduring legal foundations. Frameworks such as the Public Service Act and the Public Finance Management Act have ensured administrative continuity across regimes and provided a platform for gradual modernisation, including digital payroll systems and performance contracts.

Since the 1990s, successive reform programmes supported by development partners, including the World Bank, UNDP, the former DFID (now FCDO), and USAID, have injected expertise, funding, and technology. These partnerships proved especially critical during periods of acute fiscal stress and helped align Uganda's public administration with international governance standards.

The relative policy continuity under the National Resistance Movement government since 1986 has created space for long-term reform implementation and institutional learning. While democratic deepening remains a work in progress, this administrative stability has enabled incremental improvements in service delivery. Equally transformative has been



A public service that has endured so much can, with renewed political will, become one that truly inspires trust, pride, and confidence among Ugandans.

the 1993 decentralisation policy, which transferred substantial responsibilities for health, education, and agriculture to districts and municipalities, bringing government closer to citizens and multiplying points of service delivery across the country.

Institutions such as the Uganda Management Institute and the Civil Service College continue to strengthen professional skills, while many public servants display extraordinary dedication despite modest and often delayed salaries. This commitment is sustained by a deep sense of duty and collective responsibility.

In recent years, tools such as the Integrated Financial Management System, e-procurement platforms, and public-private partnerships have improved transparency, reduced financial leakage, and stretched limited budgets further. Beyond systems and incentives, a persistent ethic of public service rooted in Ugandan cultural values ensures officers remain committed even when rational incentives point otherwise.

Resilience, however, is not the same as excellence. To move from survival to genuine transformation, Uganda must now prioritise merit-based recruitment and promotion, close pay disparities, especially between central and local government and between scientific and general cadres, accelerate full digitisation, and strengthen independent citizen oversight. A public service that has endured so much can, with renewed political will, become one that truly inspires trust, pride, and confidence among Ugandans.



Uganda's public service: From colonial to citizen-centred governance

By Mr. James Kintu

Few state institutions in Uganda have endured as long as the public service. From its colonial origins to the present day, it has repeatedly adapted, sometimes under extreme pressure, to remain the backbone of governance and national development.

The modern public service began as a highly centralised, hierarchical, and racially segregated administration, designed primarily for control and revenue extraction during the colonial era and the immediate post-independence years. Even then, however, it introduced standardised procedures, systematic record-keeping, and the notion of a permanent civil service—foundations that would later prove invaluable.

Uganda's independence from Britain in 1962 brought rapid Africanisation and the establishment of the Public Service Commission, designed to safeguard merit and neutrality. For a brief period, Uganda boasted one of the most respected civil services in East Africa.

Between 1971 and 1986, the service was hollowed out through exile, expulsions, patronage, and militarisation. By 1986, morale, institutional capacity, and basic administrative systems had largely collapsed. The National Resistance Movement (NRM) government, with substantial donor support, embarked on an ambitious reconstruction programme: rightsizing the workforce, rebuilding pay structures, re-establishing training institutions, and rolling out decentralisation. These reforms gradually restored credibility and functionality to the public service. The last two decades have seen a phase of consolidation and digital modernisation. Widespread adoption of financial management systems, e-procurement platforms, human resource information systems, and client charters has taken



Above, Independence Day, 1960. The events ushered in Africanisation of Uganda's public service



root. The ongoing Public Service Transformation Strategy emphasises innovation, results-orientation, and citizen-centred service delivery. Progress

has been significant, though uneven; risks from politicisation, persistent pay inequities, and occasional backsliding on merit remain ongoing challenges.

Sustained transformation will require stronger political commitment to meritocracy, greater investment in ICT infrastructure, and more robust, independent accountability mechanisms. The Ugandan public service has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to reinvent itself. The challenge now is to complete the journey from a resilient survivor to a high-performing, trusted institution that fully serves all citizens.



MAKERERE COLLEGE SCHOOL

Makerere College School in Association with Uganda Public Administration and Management (UPAM) where we hold an executive position, representing secondary schools in Uganda.

For those who were in this small closet of a school, many years back, times have changed; we have expanded, and life is still a passing adventure, Makerere College School has many great things to celebrate.

We have grown tremendously not only in infrastructure and numbers, but also systems, operating a two-model campus of Makerere College School Main Campus located at Makerere Hill, and Makerere College A' level Campus in

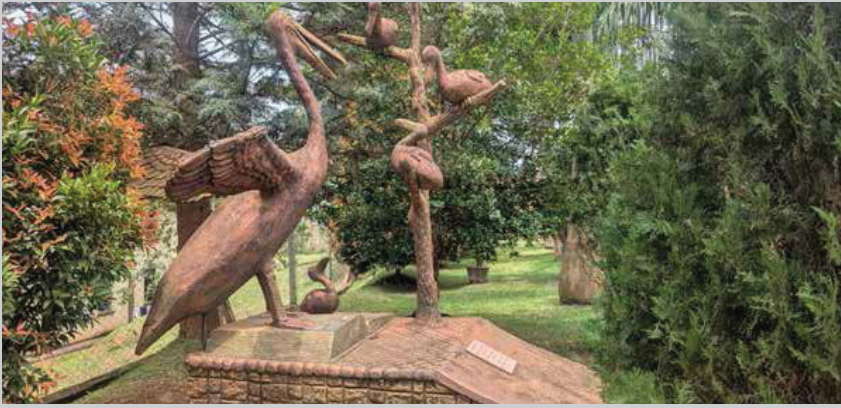


Mulawa Kira municipality, with three administration sections i.e Lower, middle and upper schools adopted from Makerere University system of colleges with schools administration

all under one supreme management.

Our Academics impact has been awesomely thrilling. "Everyone who has gone through Makerere College can act, sing or recite a poem," thanks to the strategic programs and the academic system of the school that keeps students abreast with their studies to develop holistically prepared citizens.

Makerere College School remains a beacon of academic excellence in Uganda. To uphold this position, the school has adopted several innovative mechanisms across four key areas: Learning Support, Technology & Resources, Curriculum & Assessment, and Engagement & Support.



OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In relation to co-curricular activities, we have built a strong Rugby team that has represented the country both locally and internationally walloping any big school you can think about in the region.

We have established international links with Blackebergs and Kungsholmens Gymnasiums the two best secondary schools in Sweden. This partnership is intended to develop a curriculum, cross-cultural exchange programs and Co-curricular development amongst the three schools.

We have upheld our standard high, with strong leadership programs, athletic prowess—especially in rugby, and academic performance; In the recent Kangaroo Mathematics contest, our senior three Student, Kinya Godber came first in Africa and forth globally at the finale held in Istanbul, Turkey in July 2025.

In the recent Mathematics conference organised by the Oxford University press, our teacher Mr. Mugerwa Moses was the best at preparing a model lesson and drafting scenario based Questions held at Kololo SS in July 2025.

1 Learning Support: We provide remedial classes to help learners cover the full course content. Individualised student support extends extra help to those who need it most. In addition, counselling programs on both campuses guide learners in academics, careers, and personal growth.

2 Technology & Resources: The school has embraced technological tools in academic delivery. We run digital libraries to support teaching and learning, and use digital reporting systems for grades, progress tracking, and feedback.

3 Curriculum & Assessment: We prepare students through multiple external mock examinations to expose them

to varied question approaches. The curriculum fair provides a platform to showcase projects and learning paths under the new curriculum.

4 Engagement & Support: We maintain a culture of recognition of excellence, rewarding outstanding students and staff to inspire team commitment. The school also provides bursaries for the best student in each class and for top UCE candidates. Parent-teacher engagements have been strengthened to promote open dialogue, progress updates, and shared support for learners. The academic tent serves as a hub for peer tutoring, where outstanding past candidates guide current learners in their studies.



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Be Known by Works!..And only good works.



UMI Shaping Uganda's Public Administration

Established in the late 1960s as a small training centre to address the post-independence skills gap, the Uganda Management Institute (UMI) has grown into one of East Africa's leading institutions for public-sector capacity building, applied research, and consultancy. Over five decades, its contribution has been central to nearly every phase of Uganda's public service reform, writes *Prof. Gerald Karyeija*.

UMI began as the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), tasked with preparing competent administrators for a young nation. In 1992, a parliamentary legislation transformed it into UMI to meet the evolving needs of independent Uganda. Over the years, it has further expanded into a comprehensive management development institute, offering postgraduate diplomas, master's degrees, and doctoral programmes.

Since the early 1990s, the institute has designed and delivered training for all major reform initiatives from performance management and decentralisation to results-oriented management, e-governance, and leadership development. Tens of thousands of officers at both central and local government levels have benefited from its classrooms and executive programmes.

Flagship initiatives such as the Senior Executive Programme, the Public Sector Leadership Course, and the Women in Leadership Initiative have equipped senior and middle managers with strategic vision, ethical grounding, and change-management skills aligned with national development priorities. UMI's research and policy studies have directly informed national strategies on decentralisation, public financial management, and digital transformation. Its journal and specialised centres

provide a vital bridge between academic analysis and practical policymaking.

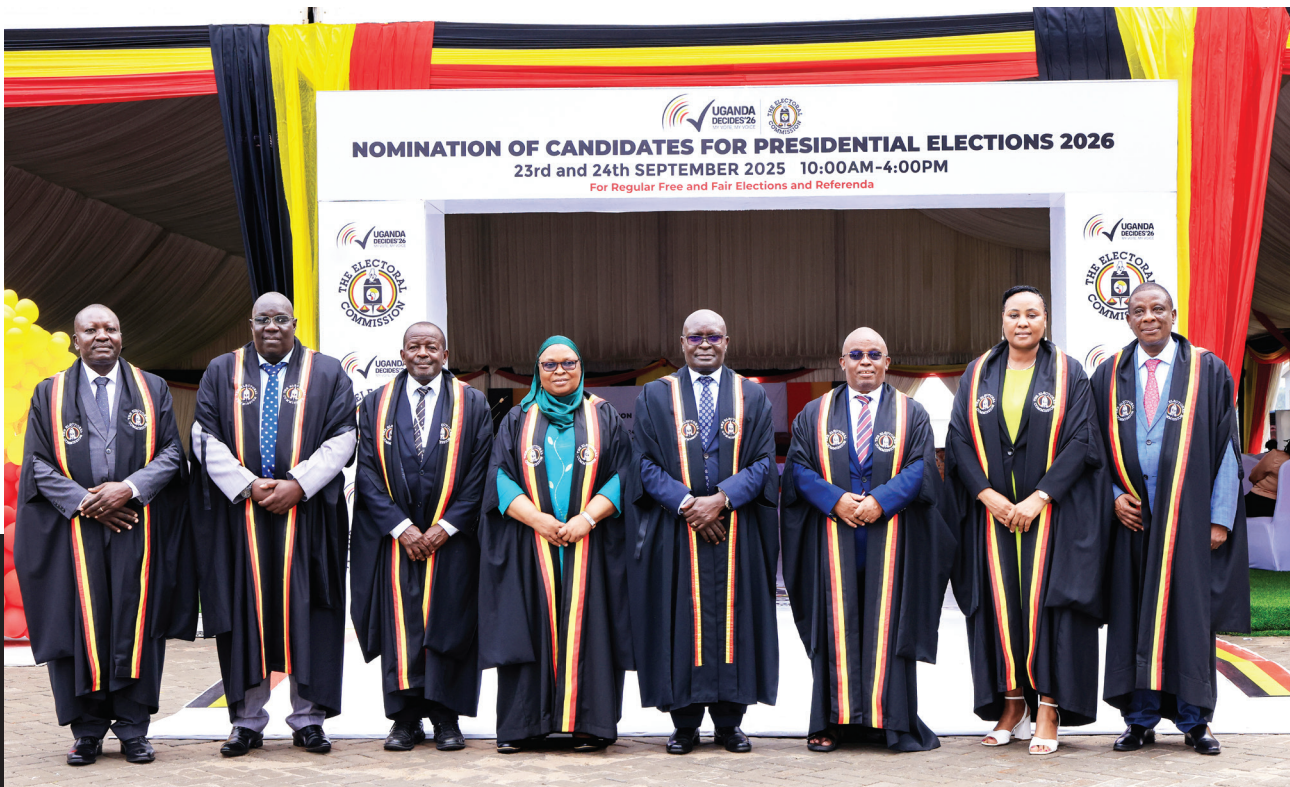
Today, UMI serves participants from across East Africa and maintains active partnerships with regional and international bodies, hosting conferences and providing consultancy services to multilateral agencies. In recent years, it has pioneered online and blended learning and developed curricula in e-procurement, data analytics for governance, and cyber-security, preparing the public service for a fully digital future.

Having trained well over 200,000 professionals, UMI remains indispensable to Uganda's governance ecosystem. Its next frontier lies in expanding doctoral training, deepening policy research, and positioning itself as the regional hub for adaptive, ethical, and innovative public leadership. UMI's story is inseparable from that of Uganda's public service: both have grown, faced setbacks, reformed, and ultimately strengthened together, shaping a state that, despite its imperfections, continues to serve, thrive, and develop.



Together, through unity and shared learning, we can build efficient, responsive, and innovative public sectors across the continent.





Members of the Electoral Commission (left to right): Comm. Hon. Okello Anthony; Comm. Emorut James Peter; Comm. Dr. Kayunga Sallie Simba; Hajat Aisha Lubega Basajjanaku (Deputy Chairperson); Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon (Chairperson); Comm. Hon. Stephen Tashobya; Comm. Beinamaryo Caroline Bright; and Mr. Kamugisha Richard Baabo, Ag. Secretary, Electoral Commission

The role of the Electoral Commission in promoting the democratic process in Uganda today

INNOVATIONS, PROCESSES, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES

By Paul Bukenya

The Electoral Commission (EC) of Uganda remains a vital institution in the country's democratic development, demonstrating a commitment to free, fair, and inclusive elections.

Established as an independent body under Article 60 of the 1995 Constitution, the Commission's responsibilities under Article 61 include ensuring regular elections and referendums, organising

and overseeing voting processes, demarcating constituencies, developing voter education initiatives, maintaining the National Voters' Register (NVR), addressing pre-election complaints, and announcing election results. This mandate positions the EC as the protector of electoral integrity, independent from external influence as outlined in Article 62, with Parliament required to allocate sufficient resources under Article 66.

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Operating within a strong legal framework, including the Political Parties and Organizations Act Cap 178, Electoral Commission Act Cap 176, among others, the Commission aligns its activities with international standards for transparency and inclusion.

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

The Commission’s vision is to become “a model institution and centre of excellence in election management,” striving for exemplary performance in maintaining electoral credibility. Its mission centers on organizing, conducting, and supervising regular, free, and fair elections through citizen participation, stakeholder engagement, and information sharing to strengthen democracy and good governance.

Our main goal is to promote participatory democracy and good governance, guided by core values such as impartiality, service orientation, accountability, professionalism, and innovation. Strategic themes highlight stakeholder participation, institutional effectiveness, and trustworthy democratic elections. These principles, aligned with global standards, emphasize independence, professionalism,

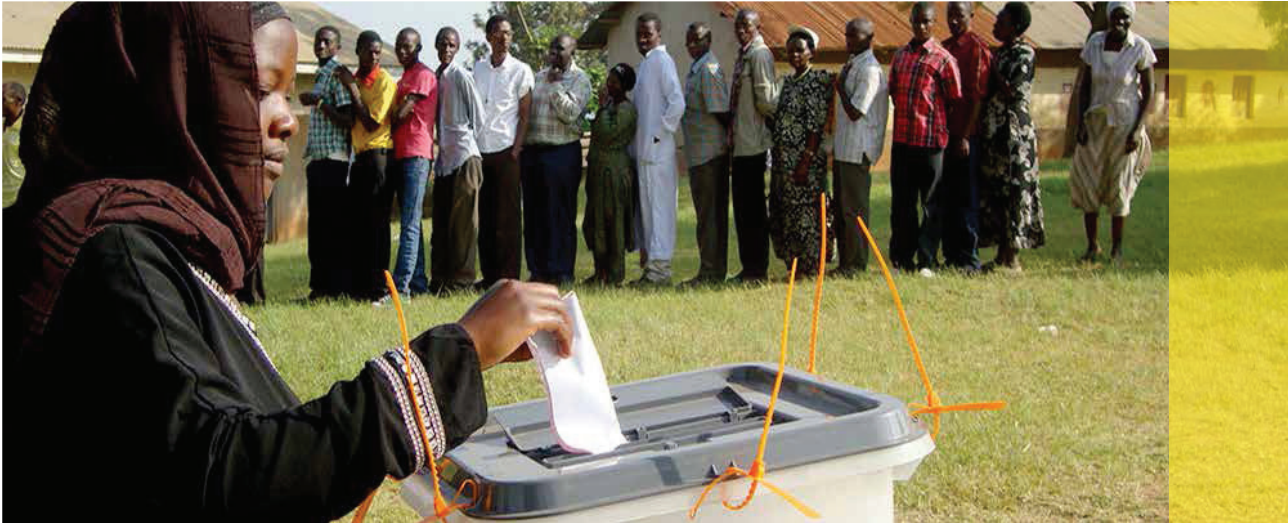
integrity, transparency, and a focus on service, ensuring our operations remain efficient and accountable.

Organisational Structure and Profile

The Commission comprises a Chairperson (Justice Simon Byabakama Mugenyi), Deputy Chairperson (Hajat Aisha Lubega Basajjanaku), and five members —Peter Emorut, Stephen Tashobya, Kayunga Sallie Simba, Okello Anthony, and Beinamaryo Caroline Bright.

The secretariat, led by the Secretary (who serves as the Accounting Officer under the Public Finance and Accountability Act 2003), manages daily operations. Supported by three directorates, namely, Operations (overseeing election management, field operations, voter education, and training); Technical Support Services (IT and voter data management), and Finance and Administration (administration, logistics, finance, and human resources), this structure ensures comprehensive execution. District offices support ongoing activities and foster a professional workforce resilient in fulfilling the Commission’s mandate.

Key Historical Milestones	Year	Description
First Direct Elections	1958	Limited franchise to LEGCO; Wild Committee formed.
Independence Elections	1962	UPC-KY alliance forms government.
First Referendum	1964	Lost Counties returned to Bunyoro Kingdom.
Multi-party Return	2005	Referendum adopts multi-party system; 2006 elections held.
BVVS Introduction	2016	Enhances voter verification.
COVID-19 Elections	2021	SOPs ensure safety; NVR at 18.1 million.
Current Roadmap Launch	2023	Strategic Plan 2022–2027 for 2025/2026 polls.
Nominations	2025	Candidates for President; Parliamentary; Local Government Councils, including representatives of Special Interest Groups;



Innovations Driving Modernization

The Commission has embraced technology that includes use of the Biometric Voter Verification System (BVVS) for voter identification and preventing multiple voting. The Election Management System that automates nomination processes, social media, and SMS to reach millions for education, and uses biodegradable materials that promote environmental sustainability.

The 2021 elections featured the use of the electronic results transmission system (ERTDS) for timely results tallying and declaration. The 2025 nominations have featured the use of an online pre-registration platform (candidate.ec.or.ug) and online supporter verification. The Commission accredited voter education CSOs under Section 12 of the Act to supplement its voter education effort. These efforts align with the Strategic Plan's focus on efficiency, though digital divides in rural areas and misinformation risks require safeguards.

Core Processes and Operational Framework

Processes follow the revised 2025/2026 Roadmap: ongoing voter education through outreach efforts and media; the demarcation of electoral areas for Local Government Councils' elections and reorganization polling stations was conducted in August 2024; mapping of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) for inclusivity in November 2024; procurement of goods and services is continuous; recruitment of elections supervisors was conducted in December 2024; stakeholder engagement with parties and CSOs is continuous. Nomination of candidates was conducted in September and October 2025, with the support of help desks at the national, region and district/city levels. The campaigns commenced September and polling for Presidential, Parliamentary, and Local Government

Councils (City/District; Municipality/City Division; and Sub County, Town, Municipal Division), including Representatives of Special Interest Groups, will be conducted within the period from 15th January to 6th February 2026 (see polling dates at www.ec.or.ug).

Efforts to Overcome the Challenges

Funding gaps hamper implementing continuous voter education and developing infrastructure, as emphasized in the 2024 presentation and 2025 budget discussions. Late amendments, late creation of new administrative units, election-related violence, commercialisation of elections, low turnout (40–50% in local elections), misinformation, and perceived bias generate criticism.

To address these issues, the EC has implemented and proposed targeted efforts that include the following:

- **Improving Transparency and Observer Access:** For 2025/2026, the EC announced an open call for the accreditation of national and international observers under Section 16(1) of the Electoral Commission Act, requiring proof of neutrality and timely reporting. Afrobarometer suggests improving communication to build trust.
- **Reducing violence and malpractices:** Proposals include sanctioning non-compliant candidates and agents and enacting laws against commercialization, which responds to vote-buying (35% reported in 2021) and violence. Campaign finance caps aim to limit spending and help to curb unequal fields. EU/EAC recommendations for independent handling of complaints are supported by toll-free lines and help desks. The EC handles complaints promptly both before and during elections.

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● **Improving inclusivity and registration:** The mapping of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) of November 2024 and elections of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) representatives, as well as proposals for diaspora and prisoner voting and early voting for essential workers, aim at promoting inclusion.

CSO partnerships (52 accredited in the 2021 Elections and 50 accredited so far for the 2026 Elections) to expand outreach.

● **Technological and Legal Reforms:** BVVS and ERTDS improvements address voter identification and tallying concerns, while the online nomination system has facilitated automation and improved nomination and ballot preparation procedures. Recommending 24-month pre-election law changes and timely funding helps prevent delays. Academic verification before nomination aims to prevent fraud and minimise complaints. These efforts, guided by observer reports and court directives, seek to rebuild confidence, although challenges like funding still exist.

● **Benchmarking other democracies:** The EC is a member of the Association of World Election Bodies (AWEB) that enables benchmarking of the best election practices and innovations from around the world.

Voter registration has been digitalized, and the Register can be accessed online for verification using phones, for example. This helps to minimize

alteration and impersonation (see www.ec.or.ug/register).

The EC Website can easily be accessed for a voter registration guide, as well as a nomination system that uses user-friendly technology.

● **Handling of election results:** Electronic transmission is used to transfer results from the district to the national tally centres promptly, as results have a timeframe for processing.

Emerging Opportunities to Strengthen Democracy

With over 50% national internet access, digital tools can boost voter engagement and monitoring. Partnerships with UNDP, UN Women, and CSOs improve inclusivity, as demonstrated in 2025 diplomatic forums. Youth programs target the 78% under-35 demographic, while legal reforms and open research policies promote accountability. The EC’s resilience—built on experienced staff, consensus decision-making, government funding over three years, a strong legal framework, and stakeholder relationships—positions it to sustain gains.

In conclusion, the EC’s journey from colonial-era polls to preparations for 2025-2026 reflects Uganda’s democratic aspirations. Having held six general elections and two referenda since 1995, the Commission urges collective support to strengthen the system.

Elective Position	Polling Date
Elections of the President and Members of Parliament (Directly-elected MP and District Woman Representative to Parliament)	15th January 2026
Elections of District Local Government Councils: District/City Chairpersons, Lord Mayor, Mayors, and Councillors	22nd January 2026
Elections of Municipality/City Division Chairpersons and Councillors	27th January 2026
Elections of Sub County/Town/Municipal Division Chairpersons and Councillors	4th February 2026

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Chief Justice -
Justice Alfonse
Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo



Deputy Chief
Justice -
Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija



Principal Judge - Lady
Justice Jane Frances
Abodo



Acting Chief Registrar
Her Worship Lamunu
Pamella Ocaya

Digital innovation, legal reform, and ADR transform Uganda's Judiciary

The Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Judiciary, Dr. Pius Bigirimana, has commended the contribution of digital innovation, legal reforms, and infrastructure development in providing faster and more equitable justice in Uganda.

“Justice in Uganda is no longer confined to the courtroom,” Dr. Bigirimana asserted. “It is now as close as a computer screen, a click, or a courthouse in your own district.”

With firm conviction, he described the Judiciary as undergoing one of its most profound transformations in decades. According to him, the ongoing shift from manual systems to digital platforms, the integration



Permanent Secretary/Secretary to
the Judiciary - Dr. Pius Bigirimana

“

Justice in Uganda is no longer confined to the courtroom. It is now as close as a computer screen, a click, or a courthouse in your own district.”

of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), and the unprecedented construction of courts nationwide are reshaping access to justice for ordinary Ugandans.

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Chief Justice Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo, breaking ground for the Gulu Regional Court of Appeal

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“These reforms,” he emphasised, “are not simply administrative adjustments. They represent a national commitment to make justice faster, fairer, and closer to the people, in alignment with Uganda’s Vision 2040 and broader national development priorities.”

Bringing Courtrooms Online

Technology sits at the centre of this reform effort. The rollout of online case filing and video conferencing, particularly for prisoners, has markedly streamlined judicial processes. “This system frees judicial manpower to address more cases, reduces the logistical and financial burden of transporting inmates, and ultimately lowers litigation costs,” Dr. Bigirimana noted.



“The shift to technology-driven services is part of the Government’s resolve to enhance efficiency and promote zero tolerance for corruption within the Judiciary.”

He added that the rules governing online hearings were gazetted earlier this year, giving legal force to virtual appearances. As a result, family members, lawyers, and the public can now follow court proceedings remotely from any location with internet access. What began as a pilot in a few Kampala-based courts has expanded to thirteen court

stations, including the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and six High Court divisions—Land, Commercial, Anti-Corruption, and Criminal—alongside Luwero High Court, the Chief Magistrates Courts of Mengo and Buganda Road, the Standards, Utilities and Wildlife Court, and the Law Development Centre Magistrates Court.

“The shift to technology-driven services,” Dr. Bigirimana observed, “is part of the Government’s resolve to enhance efficiency and promote zero tolerance for corruption within the Judiciary.” He added that this digital transition aligns closely with the NRM Manifesto (2021–2026), which explicitly identifies remote adjudication as a key pillar of judicial modernisation.



INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION NATIONWIDE

Beyond digitisation, the Judiciary is expanding its physical presence. Since July 2021, an extensive programme of construction and renovation has been underway. Ongoing projects include judicial facilities in Kole and Kibale; High Court buildings in Tororo and Soroti; Chief Magistrates’ Courts in Alebtong, Lyantonde, and Budaka; and a Grade One Court in Abim. The Moroto Chief Magistrate’s Court has also been refurbished.

“When communities see a modern courthouse rising in their area, they see government presence, accountability, and hope,” Dr. Bigirimana remarked.

JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE

For Dr. Bigirimana, these reforms are ultimately about restoring public trust in the justice sector. He attributes the Judiciary’s progress to the combined effect of technology adoption, institutional reforms, and increased staffing, all aimed at reducing backlogs and overcoming longstanding inefficiencies. “The reforms we are implementing are not just modernising the Judiciary,” he stressed. “They are transforming it into a people-centred institution committed to accountability, efficiency, and access to justice for all Ugandans.”



Soroti High Court Building



Above, Tororo High Court construction

17.5%
Average case completion has risen to this on account of electronic case management, says PS.

A SYSTEM RE-ENERGISED



The Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS) has produced swift and tangible results. According to Dr. Bigirimana, case filings have increased by 20.6%, while the average case completion rate has risen by 17.5%. At the same time, Non-Tax Revenue collections have grown from UGX 5 billion to UGX 9.2 billion—growth he attributes to the transparency and integrity of digital filing and payment mechanisms.

“This has helped us curb corruption,” he said. “Cases are filed, and fees are paid online,

eliminating opportunities for middlemen to solicit bribes.” He also highlighted the positive impact of the Administration of the Judiciary Act (2020), which introduced retirement benefits for judicial officers, enhancing morale and institutional stability.

Another key milestone, he said, was the digitisation of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, commissioned in April. “These e-enabled courts have reduced transportation costs, minimised physical appearances, and eased prison congestion by accelerating the hearing process,” he noted.



Newly installed video conferencing facilities in court



Uganda's Judiciary redefines access to justice through technology, innovation and infrastructure

In line with Uganda's National Development Plans, the Judiciary has undertaken a profound transformation, leveraging technology, innovation, and infrastructure to expand access to justice beyond the courtroom.

When Uganda rolled out its first National Development Plan (NDP I) in 2010, one truth stood out: sustainable development depends on the rule of law. Fifteen years later, the Judiciary has emerged as a model of institutional reform, embracing digital systems, enhancing transparency, expanding infrastructure, and ensuring justice is delivered fairly, swiftly, and closer to the people.

Under the implementation of NDP III (2020–2025) and in alignment with Vision 2040, the Judiciary's

transformation stands as one of Uganda's most remarkable governance success stories. This is a testament to innovation, resilience, and purpose.

The Judiciary plays a pivotal role in national transformation by interpreting laws, protecting rights, and ensuring economic justice. Yet a decade ago, it faced daunting challenges of a growing case backlog, prolonged trials, and a limited physical footprint across the country. Recognising the need for systemic change, the Judiciary embarked on reforms designed to improve access to justice, strengthen transparency, and enhance efficiency.

As of June 2025, Uganda's courts handled a total caseload of 450,124 cases, of which 279,630 were newly registered. Out of these, 259,331 cases were

“

Justice delayed is justice denied, but for us, it is now justice transformed.”



ECCMIS training for newly appointed judges

resolved, leaving 190,793 pending, with backlog cases reduced to 24.2%, down from 31.8% in 2015. This steady decline reflects the Judiciary’s strategic focus on digital systems, human resource expansion, and modern infrastructure, all of which have revitalised public confidence in the justice process.

“Justice delayed is justice denied, but for us, it is now justice transformed,” noted one judicial officer during a review workshop.

The Game Changer

If there is one reform that defines the modern Judiciary, it is digital transformation. From e-filing to video conferencing, technology has reimagined how justice is delivered. Launched in October 2021

and fully operational by March 2022, the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS) has automated the entire lifecycle of a court case, from e-filing to e-archiving. Currently implemented in 31 courts, including the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court, seven High Court Divisions, and High Court Circuits of Jinja, Mukono, Lugazi, Wakiso, Entebbe, and several Chief Magistrates’ and Magistrates Courts — ECCMIS has transformed efficiency.

The results speak volumes: case filings increased by 20.6%, completion rates improved by 17.5%, and Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) collections grew from UGX 5 billion to UGX 9.2 billion. The system minimises human contact, eliminates manual bottlenecks, and curbs corruption.

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HIGHLIGHTS



24.2%

Case backlog, down from 31.8% in 2015



23

Video conferencing systems installed in this number of courts



269

Number of operational courts in Uganda today, up from 148 in 2016

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With nationwide expansion planned, ECCMIS is fast becoming the backbone of Uganda’s digital justice revolution.

Courts Without Walls

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Judiciary accelerated the installation of Video Conferencing Systems (VCS) in 23 courts across the country. From the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal in Kampala to regional stations in Jinja, Mbarara, Mubende, Gulu, Mbale, and Soroti, video-linked hearings have reduced transport costs, enabled secure trial of high-profile cases, and brought justice closer to remote communities.

“Every time a prisoner attends court via video link instead of being transported hundreds of kilometres, we save resources — and deliver justice faster,” remarked a registrar during a regional inspection.

Data-Driven Justice

To strengthen accountability, the Judiciary rolled out the Performance Enhancement Tool (PET), a digital framework tracking workload, case complexity, and individual officer performance through a 360-degree evaluation system. Since FY 2020/21, more than 500 staff, including 91 judicial officers, have been trained on the tool, which went live in October 2025. PET promotes a culture of excellence, fairness, and continuous improvement across all court levels.

The Inspectorate at Work

Integrity remains central to judicial credibility. The Inspectorate of Courts has expanded from three to five inspectors, allowing for more comprehensive supervision nationwide. Between 2021 and 2025, the team inspected 157 courts annually and investigated over 1,200 complaints. Disciplinary actions have been firm, with 22 officers sanctioned, including four dismissals.

The Administration of the Judiciary (Inspectorate of Courts) Regulations, 2023, provide the legal framework for sustained ethical oversight and service-delivery monitoring. Complementing this, the Judiciary Anti-Corruption Strategy (2025–2030) introduces safeguards such as CCTV surveillance, toll-free hotlines (0800 111 900 / 0800 225 587), staff uniforms for easy identification, and a public reporting system that reinforces zero tolerance for misconduct.

Expanding Reach and Access

Physical access to justice has improved dramatically. From 148 operational courts in 2016, Uganda now boasts 269, a 45% increase in coverage. Of these, 190 courts operate in Judiciary-owned premises, reducing rental dependence and ensuring long-term sustainability.

The infrastructure expansion drive has birthed modern edifices such as the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal Complex, Mukono and Rukungiri High Courts, Budaka Chief Magistrate’s Court, and Patongo Magistrate’s Court, alongside seven Justice Centres in Sheema, Kole, Sembabule, Nakaseke, Buhweju, Maracha, and Namayingo districts. Ongoing projects include new High Courts in Tororo, Soroti, Mpigi, and Kibaale, as well as Magistrates’ Courts in Alebtong, Lyantonde, Abim, and Karenga.

Renovation has also been extensive, with upgrades in Lira, Gulu, Hoima, Iganga, Masaka, Mbale, Luwero, Moroto, and Kampala, ensuring inclusive, disability-friendly, and secure court environments.

“Every new courthouse is a symbol of state presence, a promise that justice is not a privilege but a right,” notes Dr. Pius Bigirimana, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Judiciary.



Drainage works in Kampala

Public administration and urban transformation in Kampala

By Benon Moses Kigenyi

In Uganda, the urbanisation rate continues to rise, with an estimated annual growth rate of about 5% and an urban population of roughly 27.39% as of 2024. This rapid growth is driven primarily by rural-urban migration in search of better opportunities in education, healthcare, and employment. With the creation of ten new cities, Uganda’s urban population is expected to triple by 2030, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive urban planning to manage growth, reduce infrastructure strain, and address challenges such as informal settlements.

Kampala, Uganda’s capital, hosts a resident population of approximately 1.8 million people and a daily working population exceeding 3.5 million. As the country’s largest city and commercial hub, it contributes over 70% of the national GDP.

Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), established under the KCC Act 2010 (CAP 195), administers the city on behalf of the central government and remains Uganda’s leading urban management agency, responsible for implementing national and international commitments on sustainable development.

Over the years, KCCA has implemented numerous initiatives and strategies to transform Kampala into a modern, vibrant, attractive, liveable, and sustainable city. This article highlights some of these initiatives.

Leveraging ICT for City transformation

As Kampala navigates rapid urbanisation and population growth, KCCA has adopted a forward-looking strategy grounded in digital innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth. Aligning with Uganda’s Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) and the Tenfold Growth Strategy, KCCA aims to modernise infrastructure, mobility, and service delivery through technology and cross-sector collaboration.

KCCA’s Smart City approach goes beyond deploying advanced systems; it engages citizens, grassroots leaders, and institutions in co-creating a modern Kampala. Key high-impact projects include smart traffic management, digital permitting, climate-resilient drainage systems, upgraded roads, and metropolitan transport solutions. These interventions position Kampala as a competitive, sustainable urban centre and a model for Africa’s digital future.

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Over the past decade, KCCA has deliberately expanded its use of digital tools to enhance internal operations, foster innovation, strengthen public service delivery, and improve community engagement.

Automating Development Control and Physical Planning

In 2020, KCCA deployed the Smart Permit system, an online platform for submitting and tracking development applications. The system enables property developers to apply from any location and monitor approvals in real time. Processing time has reduced from over 60 days to under 14 days, significantly lowering human contact and corruption. KCCA is currently integrating this function into the broader IRAS platform used across local governments.

Utilising Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

GIS supports the collection, management, analysis, and visualisation of spatial data. KCCA’s adoption of GIS has improved revenue collection, infrastructure planning, spatial development, and service delivery. GIS mapping provides better insights for decision-making by overlaying demographic, infrastructural, and environmental data.

Computer-Aided Mass Valuation (CAMV)

In January 2025, with support from the World Bank under the Kampala Infrastructure and Institutional



KCCA has deliberately expanded its use of digital tools to enhance internal operations, foster innovation, strengthen public service delivery, and improve community engagement.

Development Project (KIIDP II), KCCA introduced the CAMV system to automate large-scale property valuation for taxation. CAMV applies statistical models and market data to ensure fair and equitable valuations. Supported by GIS technology, the system improves identification of properties, reduces valuation costs, and enhances integration between physical planning and revenue administration. Property rates collections increased from UGX 5.0 billion in FY 2021/22 to UGX 59 billion in FY 2024/25—a 130% growth.

City Address Model

KCCA is implementing the City Address Model to improve navigation and service delivery. To date, over 42,000 properties have been assigned numbers, 476 properties have house plates installed, several city roads have been named, and more than 330 road name and directional signs have been installed.

Digital Innovation and Traffic Control

With support from JICA, KCCA completed the Kampala Traffic Control Centre—the first of its kind in East Africa. The Moderato system integrates AI-enabled digital oversight across 27 junctions, with plans to expand to 52 by 2030. The system is expected to reduce traffic congestion by over 65% and accidents by 45%, supporting NDP IV objectives on technology-enabled service delivery.





Digitizing City Law Enforcement

In 2022, KCCA deployed body-worn cameras for law enforcement officers to enhance transparency, accountability, and evidence collection during operations.

Citizen Engagement Through Digital Platforms

KCCA continues to expand digital channels and social networks to strengthen citizen participation, improve access to services, and promote transparency.

Building a Resilient and Sustainable Mobility System

Kampala has a total road network of 2,104 km, of which only 770.5 km (37%) is paved. Many older roads have exceeded their design lifespan and require urgent rehabilitation. However, significant improvements are underway through major investments by the Government of Uganda, AfDB, World Bank, and UK Export Finance (UKEF), including:

- Kampala City Roads and Bridges Upgrading Project (KCRBUP) – 250m from UKEF to rehabilitate 118 roads (218 km).
- Kampala City Roads Rehabilitation Project (KCRRP) – AfDB funding to upgrade 70 km.
- Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Urban Development Programme (GKMA-UDP) – World Bank-funded 81 km.
- Government of Uganda multi-year funding – rehabilitation of 50 km

citywide, with 14.5 km beginning construction in FY 2025/26.

Kampala pioneered NMT infrastructure in East Africa by pedestrianising Namirembe Road and Luwum Street. This initiative enhances walkability, reduces accidents, minimises emissions, and promotes safe, accessible mobility. Integrated land-use and transport planning has improved traffic flow, promoted mixed-use development, and enhanced street safety and air quality.

The city’s reliance on 14-seater taxis and boda bodas has proven inefficient and environmentally unsustainable. Under the City Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30), KCCA aims to introduce:

- A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system (14.4 km study underway)
- Expanded commuter rail to Port Bell–Luzira and Kyengera
- Feasibility studies for a city light rail system

These systems will reduce emissions, improve mobility, and support inclusive and green urban growth.

The Kampala Capital City Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30)

On 30 September 2025, KCCA launched the UGX 11.97 trillion five-year City Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30), whose overarching goal is “Revitalizing Kampala into a Well-Functioning City.” The plan builds on lessons from NDPIII and aligns with the more ambitious objectives of NDP IV and Uganda’s Tenfold Growth Strategy.



KCCA is implementing the City Address Model to improve navigation and service delivery. To date, over 42,000 properties have been assigned numbers...

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With Kampala’s urban population growing at 5.6% per year, KCCA’s mandate now spans smart infrastructure, quality social services, climate resilience, and sustained economic growth—guided by new frameworks for inclusive development, innovation, and citizen-centred planning. The updated approach emphasises governance reforms, climate action, and digitised service delivery, aiming to close the previous plan’s 35.5% performance gap and achieve a more visible, citywide impact.

Smart City Transformation: Technology and Infrastructure

● Road Network, Drainage & Climate Resilience

Through the Kampala City Roads Rehabilitation Project, 170 km of roads have been repaired, increasing paved network coverage from 37% in FY2023/24 to a projected 52% by 2030. Under NDP IV, KCCA plans to upgrade 325 km of roads and develop 133 km of non-motorized lanes for walking and cycling.

Drainage investments—now 95% complete after the 2023 floods—are being expanded under NDP IV to include 80 km of new lined channels, 103 black spot repairs, and upgraded climate-adaptive infrastructure. These efforts reinforce national priorities under the Tenfold Growth Strategy and Uganda’s resilience agenda.

A key component of the plan is the expansion of metropolitan transport. The GKMA-UDP’s UGX 2.1 trillion programme remains the backbone of regional mobility, strengthened by Tenfold Growth Strategy goals for integrated urban systems. New projects under the initiative include additional mass transit and connectivity upgrades.



KCCA has deliberately expanded its use of digital tools to enhance internal operations, foster innovation, strengthen public service delivery, and improve community engagement.

● Social and Economic Inclusion

KCCA is pursuing a citywide model of socio-economic transformation rooted in NDP IV and the Tenfold Growth Strategy. This approach recognises that sustainable urban progress depends not only on infrastructure, but also on equitable opportunities and empowered communities.

● Parish Development Model

In 2020/21, the Government of Uganda launched the PDM as a strategy designed to improve incomes and welfare by bringing services to the parish level, making it the lowest administrative and operational hub for planning and service delivery. The model aims to transform households from the subsistence economy to the money economy through structured interventions in areas like agriculture, financial inclusion, and infrastructure. In support of the Programme, KCCA continues to undertake efforts aimed at enabling households to transition into the money economy by providing:

- financing facilities through the PDM and other Government Social Programmes, mindset change, Parish-Based Management Information System (PBMIS) and good governance. To date, KCCA:
 - has established and fully registered 101 Parish/ward SACCO across the city
 - disbursed Parish revolving Fund of over UGX 30.0 bn to 30,000 city households and registering the highest disbursements in the country
 - 50,000 subsistence households have been entered into the Financial Inclusion System (FIS)
- This targeted inclusion supports NDP IV goals for enhanced financial inclusion, value-based empowerment, and urban skills training in informal settlements, promoting social equity and long-term poverty reduction. This super performance is starting to bear fruit with the city’s marginalised population participating in the economy, and enabling some beneficiaries to start businesses.

Welcome to ePermit System

Your Trusted Solution for e-Permit Management.

The ePermit System is a web-based platform that manages the issuance of building and development control permits in Uganda.

[Register Now](#)

Physical Planning

Plan and design the City physical infrastructure including the re-zoning, land sub-division and determination of the areas for development.

Digital platforms are enhancing efficiency

- **Education and Health Transformation**
NDP IV and the Tenfold Growth Strategy emphasise high-impact human capital investment, targeting 95% literacy, 85% numeracy, and class ratios below 30:1 by 2030. KCCA has already improved more than 35 primary schools, removed asbestos structures, acquired land for expansion, and installed 59 new toilet blocks. Health services continue to expand, with an enlarged ambulance fleet, care for up to 1.8 million patients annually, and 30% of all city births handled by KCCA facilities. Planned upgrades of maternal and infant health services aim to further reduce mortality rates, consistent with national transformation targets.
- **Environmental Management and Sustainability**
KCCA’s environmental agenda is shaped by NDP IV, the Tenfold Growth Strategy, and global green-city standards. Using ecological data, community participation, and inter-agency partnerships, the Authority is transforming waste management, biodiversity protection, urban forests, and air quality management.
- **Waste Management & Circular Economy**
KCCA has surpassed its 70% waste collection target, now serving over 280 informal settlements with expanded fleets and inclusion-focused employment

models. Under NDP IV, recycling is set to increase from 0.19% to 30% by 2030 through waste-to-energy pilots at Buyala and climate finance-backed projects.

- **Green Spaces, Air Quality & Urban Beauty**
The Urban Forest Plan has planted over 8,500 trees and installed 200 air quality monitors. Priorities include reducing pollution, reclaiming green public spaces, and enhancing beautification efforts such as the Nile/Jinja Road redesign. Monthly Car-Free Days and climate campaigns promote healthier, low-carbon neighbourhoods.

- **Leadership, Governance & Strategic Planning**
Kampala’s transformation depends on strong leadership, institutional reform, and adaptive strategic planning. Recent governance changes and performance enhancements are anchored in NDP IV and the Tenfold Growth Strategy.

- **Institutional Reforms & Performance Management**
With renewed executive leadership in late 2024, KCCA has adopted a new Client Charter and Service Delivery Standards. These tools reinforce transparency, digital innovation, and measurable results for all stakeholders.

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● **Ambitious New Targets & Financing Innovations**
The UGX 11.97 trillion strategic plan includes upgrading 325 km of roads, installing 25,000 new streetlights (covering 82%), completing Buyala landfill, and developing BRT, flyover infrastructure, advanced drainage, and stadium projects. Funding sources involve public-private partnerships, municipal bonds, and innovative climate finance streams, aligning with the goals of Tenfold Growth and NDP IV to promote sustainable, resilient urban transformation.

● **Global Aspirations and Partnerships**
Kampala’s retention of the Shanghai Award and the revival of the City Festival in August 2025 are strengthening global partnerships, attracting

investment, and enhancing the city’s international profile. Collaboration with regional and multilateral partners continues to elevate the city’s influence.

● **Persistent and Emerging Challenges**
Despite strong progress, Kampala still faces hurdles, including high youth unemployment, pervasive informality, rapid urbanisation, limited funding for growing service demands, lack of mass transit systems, severe traffic congestion, climate risks, poor air quality, and low citizen ownership of public infrastructure. These challenges are being addressed through enhanced monitoring, new engagement platforms, climate-proofing, infrastructure upgrades, and disaster-preparedness measures.



Kampala Festival

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KCCA’s new plan—anchored in sustainability, infrastructure, inclusion, and governance—reflects broader national ambitions under NDP IV and the Tenfold Growth Strategy. Achieving a well-functioning Kampala by 2030 will require next-generation partnerships, citizen co-creation, and integrated

urban systems, supported by digital monitoring and global best practices.

Key Action Pathways

- Strengthen city-region partnerships and climate-related financing to support GKMA integration.
- Deepen citizen participation, especially in informal settlements, through digital

tools and targeted skills programmes.

- Institutionalise transparent governance with SDG-based audits and public dashboards.
- Accelerate green growth, expand circular economy initiatives, enhance PDM inclusion, and assess light rail feasibility.
- Leverage global recognition, awards, and festivals to attract investment and expertise

The writer is the Deputy Executive Director of KCCA

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Kampala City urban development studies, policy frameworks, festivals, and award documentation.



Despite financial constraints, patronage pressures, occasional accountability weaknesses, and capacity gaps, the service has sustained its core functions over time.

Why Uganda's public service still stands strong



By Dr. Freddie Emmanuel Mugunga

Uganda's Public Service has long functioned as the administrative backbone of the country's governance and development, consistently enabling citizens' access to rights, public goods, and regulatory authority (Ministry of Public Service, 2021; Andrews, 2015). Its ability to operate during crises, regime transitions, and periods of resource scarcity reflects a deep institutional resilience, underpinned by historical continuity, layered reforms, and a strong ethic of service (Golooba-Mutebi, 2008; Sabi & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014; Bukenya & Muhumuza, 2017). Despite financial constraints, patronage pressures, occasional accountability weaknesses, and capacity gaps, the service has sustained its core functions over time (Therkildsen, 2008; Sezi, 1997).

As Uganda's premier institution for public administration training, the Uganda Management Institute (UMI) serves both as a knowledge hub and a catalyst for ongoing modernisation and capacity building (UMI Impact Report, 2022; Nabukeera, 2022). Drawing on UMI's empirical research, institutional archives, and wider academic analysis,

including assessments by international agencies, this article explains the mechanisms that have supported Uganda's public service resilience and identifies strategic reforms necessary for long-term transformation (World Bank, 2021; Kabale University, 2021; ACET, 2025; The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service, 2025).

Emerging research also highlights the central role of adaptive capacity and knowledge management in sustaining resilience within Uganda's public sector (Mafabi et al., 2012). This resilience is not only structural but also cultural, grounded in public service values that reflect Uganda's social and communal norms. Continuous professional development and mentorship led by institutions like UMI further reinforce these norms (Mafabi et al., 2012; Nabukeera, 2022).

Civil society engagement and multi-sector partnerships have strengthened transparency and accountability, complementing formal institutional structures (NPA, 2023; ACET, 2025). Recognising these multiple contributors is essential to designing reforms that enhance performance and build public trust in Uganda's evolving administrative landscape.

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Historical Context and Institutional Adaptability

Uganda's public service is rooted in colonial-era administrative systems that blended indigenous governance institutions with British legal and bureaucratic frameworks (Robertson, 1965; British Online Archives, 2024). Foundational components, including the Public Service Commission, the 1919 Native Authority Ordinance, and a formal bureaucracy, provided procedural continuity and space for local adaptation (GSSRR, 2017; *The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service*, 2025). The integration of traditional authorities with a centralised bureaucracy, unified by the 1949 Local Government Ordinance, created a hybrid system that reinforced indirect rule but also enabled administrative stability during later periods of transition (GSSRR, 2017; Cambridge African Studies, 1965).

After independence, the institutional framework was strengthened by laws such as the Public Service Act and the Public Finance Management Act, which helped maintain order during internal and external shocks (Ministry of Public Service, 2021; Kabale University, 2021).

Africanisation policies expanded merit-based recruitment and career progression, while successive reforms recalibrated district and local governance, retaining elements of colonial models while adapting them to new development needs (Wanyama, 2016; *The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service*, 2025). During the turbulence of the 1970s and 1980s, the combination of institutional memory and structured legal frameworks enabled the public service to rebuild and remain central to governance (Andrews, 2015; Golooba-Mutebi, 2008; World Bank, 2021).

UMI's archives and alumni testimonies show that periods of uncertainty often prompted institutional innovation. The establishment of the Civil Service College and continuous updates to training curricula in the 1990s and 2000s helped maintain professionalism and continuity (UMI Impact Reports, 2023). These experiences demonstrate UMI's long-standing role in fostering adaptive, responsive capacity development, bridging inherited administrative traditions and the demands of a modern state (Kabale University, 2021; Nabukeera, 2022). As a result, Uganda's civil service has maintained procedural depth supported by continuous learning, critical to resilience and the pursuit of service excellence.

Systemic and Organisational Factors

Uganda's public service benefits from evolving legal frameworks and organisational structures that promote both stability and adaptability. Laws such as the Public Service Act and the Public Finance Management Act have upheld institutional coherence even during politically or economically volatile periods (Ministry of Public Service, 2021; Golooba-Mutebi, 2008). Merit-based recruitment, competitive examinations, and clear guidelines implemented through the Public Service Commission (PSC) and District Service Commissions ensure a capable and responsive workforce (Wanyama, 2016; ACODE, 2021; Kabale University, 2021).

Professionalism is strengthened through PSC regulations, sector-specific standing orders, and oversight provided by institutions such as the Civil Service College. These mechanisms help manage political volatility, safeguard administrative autonomy, and maintain consistent standards across ministries and districts (Sabi & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014; ACODE, 2021; World Bank, 2021).

UMI's sustained investment in curriculum design, executive education, and reform-support programmes—including induction and continuous development for new and mid-career officers—has had a measurable impact on system stability and adaptive learning (UMI Training Statistics, 2023; Nabukeera, 2022).

Monitoring and evaluation evidence from UMI's projects shows that structured learning and leadership development reduce skills gaps and strengthen cultures of performance, ethics, and innovation (ACODE, 2021; Nabukeera, 2022). This synergy between legal frameworks, institutional practice, and strategic capacity development is central to the resilience and ongoing transformation of Uganda's public administration.

Capacity Development and Professionalisation

Capacity development and professionalisation continue to underpin the sustainability of Uganda's public service. Since its establishment, UMI has been a key driver of human capital development, training generations of public and private sector managers through postgraduate diplomas, executive courses, and long-term M&E programmes (UMI, 2023; UMI CPD Report, 2022; Saylor Academy & UMI, 2024). UMI's continued professional development (CPD) model through face-to-face, weekend, and distance learning makes training accessible and flexible. Its partnerships with regional and international



institutions have strengthened performance across central and district governments (UMI, 2023; UMI Experience in M&E, 2014).

Flagship programmes in policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation, public sector management, and digital transformation have enhanced technical, analytical, ethical, and adaptive skills for a significant proportion of Uganda’s management and evaluation professionals (UMI, 2023; Sabi & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014). Mentorship, alumni networks, and rural–urban outreach further promote practical, context-specific learning (UMI, 2023; Saylor Academy & UMI, 2024).

Growing adoption of digital tools, including IFMS, e-procurement, and automated workflows, shows how professional training combined with ICT investment enhances transparency and service reach (World Bank, 2021; Ministry of ICT, 2024). UMI’s leadership in developing and expanding digital training modules, often with global partners, reinforces its position as a central driver of Uganda’s

digital transformation (UMI, 2023; Saylor Academy & UMI, 2024).

Values, Ethics, and Accountability

The strength of Uganda’s public service is also rooted in enduring values of patriotism, responsiveness, and stewardship—shaped by both community norms and professional duty (Kabale University, 2021; Sabi & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014; Mafabi et al., 2012). These values are reinforced through formal ethical frameworks, including Codes of Conduct applied across ministries and embedded in UMI’s training programmes (Uganda Public Service Standing Orders, 2021; UMI Ethics Seminar Proceedings, 2023).

National policy discussions emphasise that integrating ethical leadership and anti-corruption practices into pre- and in-service training is vital to nurturing a service-oriented public ethos (Ministry of Public Service, 2023; African Union, 2023). Accountability is supported by institutional integrity mechanisms such as the Audit Act, whistleblower protections, the Inspectorate of Government, parliamentary committees, and sector-level disciplinary boards (Mutahaba, 2010; Bukenya, 2012). Recent developments, including citizen feedback platforms and digital oversight tools, have further enhanced transparency (World Bank, 2021; Ministry of ICT, 2024).

UMI’s continued emphasis on ethics in its curricula and policy dialogues has contributed to improved compliance, stronger integrity practices, and rising citizen trust in government institutions (UMI Ethics Seminar Proceedings, 2023; Kabale University, 2021).

Innovations, Collaboration, and Future Pathways

Over the past decade, Uganda’s public service has accelerated efforts in digital transformation, transparency, and decentralisation, reshaping how citizens access services and how the government fulfils its mandate (Ministry of Public Service, 2025; Ministry of ICT, 2024). Initiatives like Service Uganda Centres demonstrate significant progress in citizen-friendly service delivery through integrated physical and digital platforms (Ministry of Public Service, 2025; Kabale University, 2021). The Digital Transformation Roadmap and National Development Plan III priorities are enhancing data interoperability and standardising service delivery across sectors (Ministry of ICT, 2024; NITA-U, 2025).

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These innovations have been strengthened through collaboration, much of it facilitated by UMI. Regional partnerships, professional networks, and donor-supported platforms have promoted staff mobility, benchmarking, and shared learning (ACET, 2025; UMI Impact Report, 2022). UMI's involvement in certification programmes, joint research, and innovation initiatives, such as national hackathons, has expanded capacity-building and addressed implementation gaps (UMI, 2023).

UMI studies show that such collaborative platforms, communities of practice, regional exchanges, and shared digital systems drive policy innovation and boost public sector efficiency (ACET, 2025; UMI Impact Report, 2022). However, persistent digital divides, resource inequalities between districts, and uneven innovation uptake underscore the need for sustained investment and stronger stakeholder engagement (World Bank, 2021; Ministry of ICT, 2024; Kabale University, 2021; NITA-U, 2025).

Looking forward, UMI's research highlights the need to accelerate full professionalisation, strengthen transparent career pathways, and expand citizen oversight.



Uganda's public service has endured and evolved through a combination of institutional strength, adaptive reform, policy responsiveness, and a deeply rooted service ethic.



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Deepening international partnerships and leveraging regional networks will be crucial to improving benchmarking and responding to future shocks (Therkildsen, 2001; Kabale University, 2021; World Bank, 2021).

Conclusion

Uganda's public service has endured and evolved through a combination of institutional strength, adaptive reform, policy responsiveness, and a deeply rooted service ethic. Its resilience is supported by robust legal frameworks, continuous professional development, and strategic leadership from institutions such as UMI. Innovations in digital governance, collaborative partnerships, and ethical leadership have positioned the public service as a central driver of citizen-focused management. Yet continued progress requires sustained investment in professionalism, transparent career structures, digital inclusion, and strong oversight by both citizens and state institutions. With UMI's ongoing leadership in research, capacity building, and innovation, Uganda's public service is well-placed to transform resilience into a lasting legacy of excellence, trust, and service for all citizens.

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Uganda's public service: Evolution, reform, and professionalisation

By Dr. Tom Albert Wanyakala and David Mukholi

Strong and adaptable public service institutions are essential for effective governance, inclusive socioeconomic development, and the delivery of key services to citizens (Ministry of Public Service, 2021).

In Uganda, the public service functions as the administrative backbone that translates policy into results, interacts with citizens, and maintains government operations through periods of both stability and disruption (Wanyama, 2016). Over the past century, this institution has shaped Uganda's transition from colonial rule, defined by centralised control, bureaucratic hierarchy, and indirect governance through kingdoms and chieftaincies (Robertson, 1965) to independence and later efforts at Africanisation, political re-centralisation, and administrative reform.

Uganda's independence in 1962 marked a major shift, as the country inherited a public service system designed more for control and extraction than for responsive, citizen-oriented service delivery. Post-colonial reforms attempted to correct this by rapidly "Africanising" the workforce and establishing merit-based systems through entities such as the Public Service Commission (Kabale University, 2021). These efforts were, however, undermined by political instability and military rule in the 1970s and 1980s, which weakened capacity and damaged morale.

Recovery began in the late 1980s under the National Resistance Movement (NRM), accompanied by donor-supported reforms, decentralisation, capacity building, and digital innovation (Andrews, 2015). These initiatives repositioned Uganda's public service not only as a survivor but also as a platform for state-led transformation, policy experimentation, and increasing efforts toward professionalisation and ethical accountability (Mutahaba, 2010).

This article examines Uganda's institutional evolution and reform drivers, evaluates the contemporary shift toward a professionalised and self-regulating public administration, and situates these developments within broader African governance trends.

Historical Origins and Legacies

Uganda's public service traces its origins to a colonial administrative system designed for extraction, tight centralisation, and social control (Robertson, 1965; British Online Archives, 2024). The early bureaucracy was highly hierarchical, privileging expatriate officials and reinforcing regional structures such as the Buganda Kingdom and district administrations (The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service, 2025; GSSRR, 2017). As Mamdani (1996) notes, British indirect rule relied on traditional authorities while subordinating them within a racially stratified, centralised system. Despite these constraints, colonial rule left behind enduring features, such as a permanent civil service, standardised procedures, and systematic



record-keeping, that later supported institutional development (Wanyama, 2016; Kjaer, 2004).

Independence in 1962 initiated rapid Africanisation of the civil service, replacing expatriates and establishing new bodies like the Public Service Commission to uphold merit and neutrality (Ministry of Public Service, 2021; Andrews, 2015). Ministries and districts were redefined to improve technical capacity and strengthen local government (The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service, 2025).

For a brief period, Uganda had one of East Africa's most capable civil services, combining colonial administrative legacies with new African governance ideals (Clarke & Wood, 2001; Mutahaba, 2010). However, political turmoil during the 1970s and 1980s, marked by coups, militarisation, and intense executive interference, eroded professionalism and morale (Mamdani, 1996; Bukenya, 2012).

Overall, Uganda's administrative history reflects a blend of inherited structures, local adaptations, and post-independence state-building, with colonial foundations serving as both enablers and obstacles to reform (Kjaer, 2004; Andrews, 2015).

Crisis and Reconstitution: 1971–1986

Between 1971 and 1986, Uganda's public administration experienced one of its greatest crises, spanning Idi Amin's military dictatorship and the volatile post-Amin era under Obote and several interim governments (Doornbos, 1987; Peterson, 2021).

During Amin's rule, thousands of trained bureaucrats fled, were purged, or were marginalised. Loyalty and militaristic control replaced technocratic competence (The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service, 2025; Bukenya & Muhumuza, 2017). Senior posts were frequently given to military officers, destroying organisational continuity and professional norms (Glentworth, 1973).

Merit-based recruitment collapsed, leading to institutional decay, the breakdown of infrastructure, and widespread inefficiency. Ministries struggled with severe shortages, corruption grew, and arbitrary command structures undermined professionalism (Doornbos, 1987; ESID, 2017). Local authorities turned to informal, self-help initiatives as formal state systems deteriorated (Peterson, 2021).

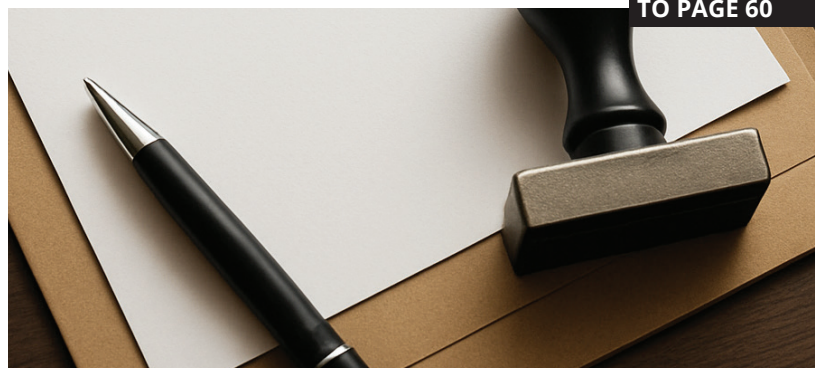
Successive coups after Amin's fall further destabilised the civil service and eroded morale (Golooba-Mutebi, 2008). By 1986, Uganda's public service, once regionally respected, had become a symbol of state fragility (The Evolution of Uganda's Public Service, 2025). Yet this crisis also reinforced the importance of strong, accountable bureaucracies in national stability and reconstruction (Hickey et al., 2019).

Reform and Recovery: NRM Era and Donor-Led Transformation

The NRM's rise to power in 1986 marked a pivotal moment for Uganda's public administration. Supported by international donors, the government launched major reconstruction efforts, including civil



Overall, Uganda's administrative history reflects a blend of inherited structures, local adaptations, and post-independence state-building





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service “rightsizing,” salary reforms, rehabilitation of training institutions like the Uganda Management Institute, and sweeping decentralisation (Ministry of Public Service, 2021; IMF, 1998; Andrews, 2015). These reforms sought to restore administrative efficiency, revive meritocracy, and align the public service with modern management practices.

Key achievements included payroll computerisation to eliminate ghost workers, the introduction of results-oriented management and client charters, and the strengthening of governance through updated audit, financial management, and anti-corruption laws (Uganda Public Service Standing Orders, 2021). This period signalled a deliberate shift away from the dysfunction of the 1970s and early 1980s (Andrews, 2015).

However, implementation gaps persisted. While policy frameworks were modern, execution was frequently hindered by limited capacity, political interference, patronage, and inconsistent professional development (Effective States, 2016; Kabuleeta, 2021).

Internal NRM political dynamics and the rise of patron-client networks also constrained reform progress (Tangri & Mwenda, 2006).

Even so, the reforms established the foundation for a more professionalised public service, revealing both the potential and limits of donor-driven transformation in post-conflict contexts (Mutahaba, 2010).

Contemporary Innovations and Persistent Challenges

Over the past two decades, Uganda has experienced significant modernisation driven by digital transformation and a renewed focus on policy capacity and citizen-centred service (Public Sector Transformation Programme, 2024).

Guided by the Digital Uganda Vision and the National Development Plans, government agencies have adopted e-procurement, integrated financial and HR information systems, and online service platforms aimed at improving transparency and accessibility.

National Information Technology Authority (NITA-U) has digitised over 100 services, including tax registration, business licensing, health, and education, moving service delivery “from queues to clicks” (Public Sector Transformation Programme, 2024).

Despite progress, challenges remain. Regional disparities in infrastructure, limited digital literacy, high data costs, politicisation, resource shortages, and pay inequities continue to undermine reform outcomes (Kabale University, 2021; Effective States, 2016). Weak enforcement of accountability frameworks and collusion within ministries hinder transparency. Citizens also increasingly demand stronger data protection and privacy safeguards.

International experience shows that digital transformation requires cultural and institutional change, not just technology adoption (OECD, 2025). Uganda’s next steps involve strengthening oversight, improving professional skills, and ensuring inclusive access to digital services.

Towards Professionalisation: Policy Proposal and its Pillars

The concept manuscript for professionalising public administration in Uganda outlines a comprehensive strategy to address entrenched weaknesses while building a future-oriented public service. It emphasises statutory recognition of public administration as a regulated profession, merit-based appointments, ethical accountability, and enhanced professionalism (Concept Policy Proposal, 2025).

Key pillars include:

Statutory recognition of public administration

A legal framework, similar to those governing law or medicine, would elevate the profession, attract skilled talent, and reinforce core constitutional principles such as impartiality and integrity (Sezi, 1997; Mutahaba, 2010).

An accredited professional cadre

Clear qualifications, continuous professional development, and licensing requirements would prevent patronage-based appointments and ensure

competence across leadership positions (Ayeko-Kümmeth, 2014).

A profession-specific code of conduct

Integrating a tailored code of ethics into legislation, supported by strong disciplinary systems, would promote accountability and protect whistleblowers (Uganda Public Service Standing Orders, 2021). Self-regulation through the Uganda Institute of Professional Public Administrators (UIPPA).

A statutory, peer-led body would enhance autonomy, peer accountability, and professional discipline, much like ICPAU and the Uganda Law Society (Sezi, 1997; Tangri & Mwenda, 2006).

A value of voluntary, service-oriented public leadership

Emphasising commitment, stewardship, and community service would help embed public trust and strengthen professional identity (Galukande-Kiganda, 2024).

Comparative Lessons and Regional Perspectives

Uganda's professionalisation agenda aligns with regional reforms across East and Southern Africa (Mutahaba, 2010). Experiences from Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda demonstrate that sustained legal reform, strong oversight, and technology adoption are central to building effective bureaucracies (Bosire et al., 2015).

Digital innovations such as Rwanda's Irembo platform, Kenya's Huduma Centres, and Tanzania's e-government reforms illustrate the transformative potential of citizen-centred service platforms (Owusu, 2012; ACET, 2025).

On anticorruption, Botswana provides lessons through its strong institutions, legal protections, and social norms supporting integrity (Mwamba, 2013). Regional organisations such as AAPAM and the African Peer Review Mechanism support cross-country learning, leadership development, and shared professional standards.

These experiences show that public service reform is both technical and political, requiring sustained

investment and regionally informed adaptation (Therkildsen, 2008).

Innovations and the Road to Transformation

Uganda's current reforms are driven by digital integration, collaborative governance, and enhanced capacity building (Ministry of Public Service, 2021). Initiatives such as Service Uganda Centres demonstrate progress toward transparent, decentralised, and integrated service delivery.

However, gaps in digital infrastructure, literacy, privacy safeguards, and public trust persist. Ensuring meaningful transformation requires strong oversight institutions and continued investment in the ICT backbone (ACET, 2025).

The proposed professionalisation model integrates statutory self-regulation, regional representation, ethical oversight, and clear grievance-handling procedures to strengthen professional standards and public trust (Concept Policy Proposal, 2025).

International recognition of Uganda's digital achievements—including the LC1 Digital Certification System and regional partnerships—shows growing momentum toward a responsive, citizen-centred public service.

Conclusion

Uganda's public service has evolved through colonial inheritance, crisis, recovery, and ambitious reform. Today, with renewed focus on digital transformation, professionalism, citizen service, and ethical governance, Uganda stands as both a regional leader and a learning partner.

Meaningful transformation, however, requires more than policy: it demands full professionalisation, statutory recognition, independent oversight, and a deep commitment to merit, integrity, and voluntary service.

The emerging professionalisation agenda, supported by strong governance, capacity building, and regional partnerships, offers a clear path toward a responsive, resilient, and citizen-centred public service for Uganda and the wider African region.



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